DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 429 735 PS 027 604

AUTHOR Lythe, Cathy
TITLE Spreading Their Wings: Seven Hundred and Sixty-Seven Parents Talk about Their Children's Home and Early Childhood Education Experiences. A Report for the Ministry of Education.
INSTITUTION New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington.
SPONS AGENCY Ministry of Education, Wellington (New Zealand).
ISBN ISBN-1-877140-22-8
PUB DATE 1997-00-00
NOTE 112p.
AVAILABLE FROM NZCER Distribution Services, P.O. Box 3237, Wellington, New Zealand.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Day Care; *Early Childhood Education; Educational Attainment; Employed Parents; Family Environment; *Family Income; *Family Structure; Foreign Countries; Interpersonal Competence; *Parent Attitudes; Parent Background; *Parents; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; School Choice; Telephone Surveys
IDENTIFIERS Day Care Selection; Family Activities; New Zealand; Preschool Selection

ABSTRACT

This telephone survey examined the early childhood education (ECE) experiences, home experiences, and home resources of near-5-year-olds in New Zealand, as identified by their parents. Participating were 767 New Zealand families in Wellington and Porirua, a sample selected to be comparable to those selected in other longitudinal studies. The main findings of this study follow. Around 60 percent of mothers were in paid employment. Family income was related to the number of parents employed and occupations, and children in sole-parent families were more likely than others to be in low-income households. Most parents reported four kinds of family activities, with family income and mother's educational level associated with different activity patterns. Parents' description of their contribution to children's development included spending time with them, providing resources that cost money, reading to them, and providing a stable family environment. About half the children could read or recognize some words; about one-third could add or subtract. The use of two or more ECE services was related to maternal education and family income. Creches and private informal care were the two main types of ECE service first used. Later ECE service use was related to family income. The main reasons for choice of children's first ECE service were suitability to parents' needs, previous family/friend's attendance, location, and reputation. Parents' ratings of children's competency were related to parents' education, family income, and family structure. The main factors in parental choice of primary schools were proximity, reputation, and previous family attendance. The questionnaire is appended. (KB)

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SPREADING THEIR WINGS

SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SEVEN PARENTS TALK ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN'S HOME AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION EXPERIENCES

Cathy Lythe

A REPORT FOR THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

by

the NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
WELLINGTON
1997

New Zealand Council for Educational Research
P O Box 3237
Wellington
New Zealand

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ISBN 1-877140-22-8

Distributed by NZCER Distribution Services
P O Box 3237
Wellington
New Zealand

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the results of a telephone survey of 767 Wellington and Porirua families whose children turned 5 in late 1993-mid 1994. The survey was designed to provide data on the children's early childhood education experience, home experiences, and home resources in order that:

(a) The findings of the companion main study of the longitudinal *Competent Children* project, covering 307 children at age 5, could be confirmed with a larger sample of children. Such confirmation between studies is a vital part of ensuring that research findings are soundly based.

(b) The survey children could enter into the related *Smithfield* longitudinal study of student choice of schools, subjects, and further education or work when they turned 11, to provide that study with a second cohort.

The survey sample area was therefore chosen to match one of the Smithfield study areas, and is narrower than the wider Wellington region base of the Competent Children study. Another difference between the main study and survey samples is that the main-study sample was designed to include comparable numbers of children in the main types of early childhood education services. The survey sample provides a more representative base of enrolment patterns.

The survey sample described in this report has higher family incomes and higher parental educational qualifications than both the Competent Children main-study sample, and 1991 Census data. Correspondingly, the survey children's schools were of a higher socioeconomic decile ranking— 64 percent attending schools in the top 3 deciles, compared with 30 percent over all. However, this reflects the profile of schools in the area, showing that the sample area does not provide a representative capsule of New Zealand as a whole—not that any one area can perhaps provide this. The 2 studies taken together do allow us to give some general trends, with the caveat that they may apply more to populations which have higher incomes than the national average.

Some of the main findings arising out of the survey material and its comparison with our main study follow.

Material on the Employment Patterns of Parents of Near-5-year-olds

Our data indicated that around 60 percent of mothers of near-5-year-olds were in paid employment. Sole parents had much the same full-time employment rate as mothers in 2-parent families (19 percent), but their rate of part-time employment was lower (around 30 percent compared with around 40 percent for mothers in 2-parent families), and around 50 percent were not in paid employment compared with around 38 percent of mothers in 2-parent families.

About 40 percent of the mothers in part-time employment worked 10 hours or less a week, and much the same proportion worked 10–20 hours a week. Most of those employed full time worked between 30–40 hours a week, but around 30 percent worked more than 40 hours a week.

Mothers were much more likely than fathers to have more than one job: a ratio of around 5 to 1, around 12 percent of employed women. This reflected their higher rate of part-time work. Fathers of near-5-year-old children had a part-time employment rate of around 5 percent.

Income Patterns

Family income levels were related to the number of parents employed, and their occupations. Higher income and occupational levels were associated with higher educational qualifications, and vice versa.

Family Types

Around 80 percent of children near the age of 5 lived in 2-parent nuclear families. Six percent lived in extended families with both parents, 3 percent in extended families with one parent, around 10 percent lived in sole-parent families, and 2 percent in reconstituted families (1 birth parent and partner). Most children whose families no longer included one biological parent continued to see that parent and to get on with him (largely), or her.

Children in sole-parent families could not be seen as socially isolated, but they were more likely than others to be in low-income households, and to have less access to experiences and resources that cost money. A third of the sole parents in the survey had no school qualifications, compared with around 10 percent of the mothers in 2-parent families. While the main study found 35 percent of sole parents were studying compared with 20 percent of mothers in 2-parent families, it also found that those with no school qualification were least likely to be continuing their own education as their 5- year-old child neared school starting age.

Most of the near-5-year-old children had at least one sibling: 90 percent of those in 2-parent families, and 75 percent of those in sole-parent families.

Family Activities

Most parents of near 5-year-olds reported an average number of 4 different kinds of activity that were often done as a family. The 6 main kinds of activity were: physical, socialising with others, exploration or special events, routine housework, literacy-related activities, and watching television or films. Family income and mother's educational level were the main characteristics associated with different patterns in family activities. Some gender differences emerged in each study—but were not common to both studies.

Parental Contributions

Most survey parents described their contribution to their child's development of skills in terms of their spending time with the child and providing helpful experiences (74 percent); providing resources that cost money (41 percent); reading to the child or going to the library (35 percent); encouraging the child to explore and be his or herself (28 percent); teaching social skills and manners (25 percent); and providing a stable family environment, or interaction with other family members (27 percent). These were responses to an open-ended question, and indicated what parents thought was most useful to their child's development rather more than actual practice. (The main study found that 75 percent of the parents read to their children at least once a day.)

Home Reading

The level of pre-reading activity for near-5-year-olds was high. Almost all children in both studies were looking at books by themselves, asking for favourite books to be read, playing at reading, and memorising favourite stories. Three-quarters of the main-study children were said by their parents

to know that certain sounds go with certain letters—somewhat less than the 91 percent in the survey. This might reflect the higher income levels in the survey sample (the main study found that the higher the family income, the more likely it was that children could associate sounds and letters, and this trend is also apparent in the survey data).

In addition, around 55 percent of the near-5-year-olds could read or recognise some words.

Parents of children from higher-income homes and from families where the mother had a school qualification were more likely to report reading activities additional to the ones above.

Gender differences favouring girls were more apparent in the main study than in the survey.

Home Mathematics

Survey parents said that almost all the children near the age of 5 could tell their own age, counted out loud, used numbers when helping their parents with routine housework, could tell the time, or try to, and sang counting songs. Around half could talk about fractions.

Gender differences were not apparent at this age.

Parents from the lowest-income group, Pacific Island parents, and mothers who had no school qualification or School Certificate were less likely to report mathematical activities in addition to those we asked about.

A third of the survey children were reported to be adding or subtracting numbers compared with 19 percent of the main-study children.

Early Childhood Education Experience

A third of the near-5-year-olds in both studies had attended only one early childhood education service prior to starting school. Thus it is likely than most children experienced 2 or more early childhood education services. However, use of 2 or more early childhood education services was more common for Pakeha/European children whose mothers had a school qualification and who came from high-income families.

We found that childcare or creches, and private (informal) care, were the 2 main types of early childhood education service first used by children. Our main-study children were more likely to have used playgroups and family day care than the survey children. The median length of hours per week spent in a child's first early childhood service was around 9 hours.

Both samples showed a move to kindergarten by the age of 3 and 4, as children became eligible for the early childhood education service which was least costly for parents. Kindergartens were also more likely than other services to cater for children from low-income homes, and those whose parents had no or low school qualifications. The survey data also showed a similar pattern for nga kohanga reo (though this service was not included in either sample). Childcare was most likely to be used by children aged near 5 whose mothers were in full-time employment. Private preschool attendance and nannies were largely the preserve of the highest-income families. The median hours per week spent at the child's last early childhood education service was 15 hours.

Almost all children were said to have regular attendance at their early childhood education service. The main reasons for irregularity were the child's health, or conflict with parental work or study needs.

Characteristics of Early Childhood Education Services

Both the survey and main-study kindergartens had the best-qualified staff, but highest group sizes and staff:child ratios. They tended to have a higher turnover of children. They also served a wider social and ethnic spectrum of children than other services. More kindergartens and childcare centres than playcentres were found in low-income areas.

Parental Reasons for Choice of Early Childhood Service

The main reasons for choice of children's first early childhood education service were that it suited the parents' needs (often employment-related), previous family or friend's attendance, its location was suitable, and it had a good reputation. Location was more important in the choice of the child's last early childhood education service than previous family or friend's attendance and reputation. Cost was more of a factor in the choice of the first early childhood service than the last.

More survey parents than main-study parents felt they had chosen their child's early childhood education service by default. Around 12 percent of survey parents felt they had no choice of either first or last service.

Parental Perceptions of the Benefits of Early Childhood Education

Most parents in both studies could identify only benefits for their child from their early childhood education experience. These were mainly to do with social skills and experience, and cognitive and language skills. Survey parents tended to be more positive than main-study parents—perhaps reflecting differences in the parental characteristics, or the differences in the types of early childhood education experienced.

Children's Health

Almost all children at the age of near 5 in the 2 samples had had their hearing tested (around 90 percent) and most had had their eyesight tested (but more in the higher-income area covered by the survey sample—88 percent compared with 75 percent in the main study). Free checks are done in early childhood education services for both of these. Maori children in the sample were less likely than others to have had their vision checked.

Children's Competency Levels

This was a main focus of the main study, and is reported more fully there. We did ask the survey parents some questions about their children's competencies which we also asked of the main-study children's teachers. Over all, the parental rating of children on our items relating to social skills with peers, social skills with adults, and communication, were much the same as teacher ratings of children in the main study. Parents rated children's curiosity more highly than teachers.

The survey data also showed that parents without school qualifications, parents in the lowest-income brackets, and sole parents were more likely than others to give their children lower competency ratings. These lower ratings may reflect less confidence on the part of the parents or possibly that the children had not achieved a higher level of competency.

Parental Choice of Schools

The 3 main factors in parental choice of primary schools in both the survey and main study were the school's proximity to the child's home, its reputation, and previous family attendance.

A third of these parents of near-5-year-olds had already chosen their child's secondary school. Reputation was the most important factor, followed by proximity to the child's home, school type, and previous family attendance.

The survey material provides us with a picture of the associations between different family characteristics and different patterns of early childhood education participation and choice, of family resources, and children's experiences. In most cases, the material confirms similar associations found in the main Competent Children study, thereby increasing our confidence in those findings. These associations provide a solid basis for improving our understanding of young children's lives, and the contributions which family resources and education make to them.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

This is the third report in the series reporting on the findings from the Competent Children project funded by the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER).[1] The project aims to discover what impact children's family resources and early childhood educational experiences have on the development of their cognitive, social, communicative, and problem-solving competencies. We are interested in both current and long-term influences. The research design hypothesis is that both home and educational experiences contribute to the development of children's competencies.

This report provides material from a phone survey of parents of 767 children with birth dates between 1 October 1988 and 31 July 1989 attending early childhood services (ECSs) in 12 Porirua and Wellington local body wards. These are the same wards used for drawing the sample for the Smithfield Project. Parents were contacted through ECSs and schools in these local body wards.

The study was undertaken between 1 October 1993 and 31 July 1994. Originally it was intended to involve the survey familes in a replication of the origins and destinations component of the Smithfield research project.[2]

The interviews with parents thus included material on family characteristics, resources, and on parental choice of school and aspirations for their child. The interviews also included material on early childhood education experience and the children's competencies to allow us to provide a description of these for a larger number of children of much the same age as the main Competent Children study sample. One purpose was to see if trends found in the main study would be confirmed by this larger sample. The major difference in the samples is that the main-study sample was drawn to provide comparable numbers of ECSs of different types, rather than reflect the use of different services at the age of nearly 5, as this survey does.

A profile of the early childhood centres with children in the survey was also collected from the sample children's ECSs. The profile, like that used in the main study, provided information about the centre roll, fees charged, the curriculum, staff expectations of children, and staff qualifications.

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[1] The first was the report on the schema development substudy, *Thinking Children*, by Anne Meade and Pam Cubey (1995) and the second, *Competent Children At 5* by Cathy Wylie, Jean Thompson, and Anne Kerslake Hendricks (1996).

[2] Two reports of the Smithfield study's findings are available from the Ministry of Education's Research Section: Lauder *et al.* (1994) *The Creation of Market Competition for Education in New Zealand*, and Lauder *et al.* (1995) *Trading in Futures: The Nature of Choice in Educational Markets in New Zealand*.

Figure 1

Competent Children Project Outline

Year	Main Study	Survey	Schema Study
1992	**Pilot Study**—near 5-year-olds 19 children 6 ECSs (1 of each of ECS types in study, 2 playcentres (rural/urban)) 7 research instruments Survey to establish extent of non ECS usage in Porirua Basin		
1993–94	**PHASE I** **Field work**—near 5-year-olds 307 children and parents 87 ECSs 6 instruments **Reports:** Competency, quality frequencies reported to Ministry of Education; study participants (seminars and posted summary) **Pilot study**—6-year-olds 16 children 10 schools	**Field work**—near 5-year-olds 767 children 56 ECSs 2 instruments (parent, ECS) Initial ECS usage, school choice, and tertiary saving reported to Ministry of Education	**Field work**—near 5-year-olds 18 children (in main study also) 4 ECSs 6 instruments (as in main study) and Samples and Records (child, parent, ECS)
1995–96	**PHASE II** **Field work**—6-year-olds 298 children 121 schools 330 teachers 3 instruments **Conference papers:** – Early Childhood Education Quality, Family Resources, and Children's Competencies at Age 5. – Early Childhood Education Services: What Works for Parents?	Brief postal contract with parent/caregivers Consents renewed	**Book:** *Thinking Children*
1996	**Report:** *Competent Children at 5* **Handbook** for parents and practitioners: *Five Years Old and Competent.* **Conference paper:** Between 5&6: What happens to the impact of Early Childhood Education Quality and Experience on Children's Competencies?		
1996–97	**PHASE III** **Field work**—8-year-olds 523 children 168 schools 547 teachers 3 instruments	⇦ 242 children incorporated into main study **Report:** *Spreading Their Wings*	
1998	**Reports:** *Competent Children at 6* *Competent Children at 8*		
If funding continues			
1998–99	Phase IV — 10-year-olds		
2000–1	Phase V — 12-year-olds		
2002–3	Phase VI — 14-year-olds		
2004–5	Phase VII — 16-year-olds		

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Research Questions for the Competent Children Project

The research questions fall into 2 groupings. The first is clearly focused on the influence of early childhood experiences. Our association with the Smithfield project, a longitudinal study focusing on school choice in the context of family and school resources, beginning with children in their final year of primary school, is reflected in the second set of questions. The areas covered by this survey are marked with an asterisk.

Influence of Early Childhood Education Experiences

*1. How does the nature and extent of young children's early childhood educational experiences in the Wellington region produce short-, medium-, and long-term effects—
   - on what the children can do (i.e., on their social, communicative, cognitive/learning, and physical competencies); and
   - on their participation in education?

2. Can early childhood education experiences temper the influences of family backgrounds on children's competence (positively or negatively)?

3. What is it about the nature of different early childhood education experiences in the Wellington region—
   - structural variables (group size, staff:child ratio, staff training),
   - service type,
   - curriculum goals and approaches,
   - adult-child interactions,
   - staff-parent, whanau communication, and parent, whanau involvement,
   - stability of early childhood care and education, including multiple use—

   which affects the development of children's competencies? Of these, which have the greatest or longest impact?

*4. What effect do family characteristics—
   - family income,
   - mother's education,
   - ethnicity,
   - family type,
   - family activities—

   have on the development of children's competencies?

5. What effect does children's health have on the development of children's competencies?

Choice

*1. What factors affect parents' choice of early childhood education services (ECSs) and schools for their children in the Wellington region?

*2. Do parents and whanau from different backgrounds use different ECSs?

*3. Are parents/whanau making long-term provision for their children's education, given the recent changes in policies for funding education?

Consistency

In addition: Do the associations found in the main study particularly related to factors linked to ECSs, and to family resources and characteristics, occur with the larger sample afforded by this survey?

Compiling the Data Base

Information about the project and consent forms was sent to ECSs during January and February 1994 for distribution to the parents of children in the target age range, and to all primary schools in February 1994 for children who had started school as 5-year-olds since 1 October 1993. Some ECSs were able to give us names of children in the target age range. The ECSs were asked to distribute the forms for parents to complete and return; schools were asked to collect and return their forms. ECSs were also asked to complete a self-administered profile using, for the sake of consistency, information current at the week ending 3 June 1994, and, because the children now at school had attended an ECS in the previous year, were also asked to provide information on whether their circumstances had since changed since November 1993.

Instruments Used in The Survey

These are to be found in the appendix.

1. **Main Caregiver Interview**

This comprises a structured telephone interview held with the main caregiving parent of each of the survey children. This provides information about their family, home activities, family support systems, parents' occupations and school qualifications, the child's initial and final ECS experience, the child's health, and parental ambitions for their child's future education.

The interview schedule is a modification and amalgamation of 2 instruments from the main study—the "Main Caregiver" and the "Adults' Perception of Children's Competencies". Parents were asked to give their perceptions of some of the dimensions of their child's competencies in these areas: Communication, Curiosity, Perseverance, Social Skills with Peers, Social Skills with Adults, and Physical Ability and Dexterity.

2. **Centre Profile**

Supervisors and head teachers in the ECSs provided information about staffing (numbers, salary, education, ECS experience, training) and the centre's programme. They also provided summary information on the socioeconomic and ethnic profile of children attending, their roll stability, roll numbers, and roll capacity. Staff were asked what levels of competency they would expect of a child of nearly 5 years of age in the spheres of communication, social skills, learning and exploration, early literacy, early mathematics, puzzles and problem solving, physical ability and dexterity, and music.

The Centre profile was adapted from the partially self-administered version used in the main study to be fully self-administered.

Sample

Sample Construction

Originally we planned a randomly selected sample of 1500 children within the Smithfield birthday range drawn from the population attending schools, kindergartens, playcentres, and childcare centres in our target area. We did not have the resources to include every child in the survey. Our first estimate used Ministry of Education figures of 2570 enrolments of 4-year-olds in early childhood centres in the chosen locations in the Wellington statistical area at 1 July 1993. From this figure we calculated our potential target population as approximately 2140. This was based on taking the total number of 4-year-olds and dividing to give a figure for the 10 months of the year represented by our target birth dates. We assumed an even distribution of births over the year. We were reasonably confident that the figure of 2140 would be a fairly high estimate because the Ministry's figures are based on enrolments, not on children. Children who use more than one early childhood service will appear twice in the Ministry figures. It therefore seemed likely to us that the actual pool of children would be smaller.

In looking for some confirmation of the likely figure we extracted from the 1991 Census data the number of children in the wards with the same birth dates as our target population. These children were not necessarily the same children because, in a mobile population such as Wellington's, families were likely to have moved in and out of the area. Nevertheless, we thought the census figure might give us another estimate of the numbers of children eligible for our survey. The census figure of 2442 children in total in the target area with these birth dates was actually higher than our estimate from the Ministry's figures, when we expected it to be lower.

One explanation for this difference in the extrapolation is that while on the one hand the Ministry's figure could have been inflated by multiple enrolments, it could also have been an underestimate due to the non-inclusion of children who were not enrolled in any early childhood service. However, this seems unlikely, given the experience of Competent Children researchers earlier in the study. Extensive but unsuccessful efforts were made in the Porirua basin area to contact families with children in the target age range who were not enrolled in any ECS. Fewer than 50 likely children out of a total pool of around 2442 children based in the 1991 census data were located, and only 6 families who agreed to an interview were confirmed as having children with no ECS experience. The researcher undertaking this work reported that many of the other 46 children were enrolled at an ECS but seldom attended. The issue was one of irregular attendance rather than non-attendance. Non-use of early childhood services is unlikely to account for the discrepancy in the figures we have.

A further possible explanation is that families with children in our target range moved out of the area and were not replaced with similar families. While some of the suburbs in the area chosen could be ones which families with young children move out of, rather than into, it seems unlikely that this would be a general trend, given that it was a large and diverse geographical area.

Sample Composition

The final sample of 767 participants was derived from the parental consents returned. A total of 1043[3] names including those supplied by ECSs and those consenting to take part were initially

[3] There was some overlap with children already participating in the main study. Ninety-two names given by ECSs were those of children already included in the main study and these were subsequently weeded out.

entered into the data base. The main reasons for our not being able to achieve our target of 1500 children were:

- information provided by the early childhood centre was incorrect with the result that we were unable to trace the parents (generally we were given the wrong phone number);
- phones had been disconnected;
- families had moved house and could not be traced; and
- parents declined to be interviewed after initially giving consent.

Both Ministry of Education and Census sources suggested that there were between 2000 and 2500 children in the Smithfield local body wards in the target age range. If we include the children taking part in either the main study or the survey, a total of just under 1000 children in the Smithfield local body wards were included in the Competent Children study.

Some of the other factors which have limited our ability to count and contact families with children in the target group included the Privacy Act, the timing of our approach to centres, teacher/supervisor workload, and the difficulties of co-ordinating dealings with a number of different ECSs and schools.

Privacy Act

The provisions of the Privacy Act not only caused delays in obtaining consent from parents but also meant that parents had to make a conscious decision and act to sign a consent form to allow researchers to approach them to join the project. Prior to the passing of the Privacy Act, ECSs and schools would have been able to provide researchers with basic details about children enrolled without asking parental permission. Consent to be approached would not have been required, although, of course, consent to join the project would still have been sought. The Privacy Act, by requiring institutions to seek permission to release information on individuals, interposed a significant barrier between the project researchers and the survey population, whether they were being contacted through early childhood centres or through schools. Many centres and schools did not provide contact details of children without the parents' consent, and yet our experience suggests that many parents who forgot or could not be bothered at the time to return a form consenting to be approached were in fact happy to be interviewed about their child.

Also the provision of ECS roll details would have enabled us to calculate more accurately our potential target population and response rate.

Timing

We had planned to approach centres 2 months before Christmas 1993. However, because of delays, mainly due to the provisions of the Privacy Act, our approach to parents occurred immediately prior to Christmas. A number of centres commenting on the poor response from parents felt that parents were too busy at that time of year to even read notices, let alone return them.

Workload Factors

Another significant factor in accounting for non-response was the workload of staff in centres and schools. Usually in early childhood centres the tasks of identifying target children, then distributing and collecting forms, fell to teachers or supervisors. A number of centres identified lack of staff time as their main reason for not taking part. This was especially true of centres where staff had

recently been appointed. These staff were particularly under pressure because of their need to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings. Other centres opted out of the project when asked to complete the early childhood centre profile document because they had no more time to give the project.

Schools found the task a little easier as generally they were able to call upon some administrative support from office staff. In some schools it also helped that target children were in a number of classrooms, so the load was spread amongst a number of teachers rather than falling on a single person.

Sample Distribution

The final sample depended upon our gaining access to and consent from families. On a number of comparisons we found our sample differed from the population at large. Kindergartens were over-represented in the 4- to 5-year-old age range and nga kohanga reo underrepresented.[4] Our families had significantly higher incomes than those in the National Research Bureau (NRB) national sample.[5] They had educational attainments above the national average.[6] There were more women in the paid workforce.[7]

Six hundred and seventy-three families (88 percent) described their child's ethnic background as Pakeha-European. However 91 (13 percent) of these families also acknowledged other ethnic backgrounds. Sixty-four families (8 percent) described themselves as Maori; 44 of these (5 percent) described the child's background as Maori and Pakeha).[8] Another 54 (7 percent) families had

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[4] Education Statistics of New Zealand 1994 (Data Management and Analysis Section, Ministry of Education) showed attendance at kindergartens in the Wellington Region constituted 62 percent of early childhood enrolments compared with 74 percent in our sample. Comparative figures for other ECSs (Ministry figures in parentheses) are: playcentre 5 percent (6 percent); childcare, including private preschools, 16 percent (18 percent); nga kohanga reo 2 percent (7 percent); Pacific Island language nests 1 percent (2 percent); home-based care 1 percent (2 percent); and playgroups 0 percent (1 percent). The sample is representative of overall ECS attendance figures for the area other than for nga kohanga reo and kindergartens.

[5] The income figures given in the 1993 NRB national random sample survey of parents of children under 5 show 19 percent with a "high" family income ($50,001 or more), 30 percent in a bracket defined as medium ($25,001–$50,000), and 42 percent in the low-income bracket ($25,000 or less) (NRB, 1993, p. 12). The income distribution for our survey is 50 percent with family incomes of more than $50,000, 29 percent in the mid-income bracket, and 12 percent in the low-income bracket as described in the NRB national sample. The income distribution for families in the main study was 39 percent with family incomes of more than $50,000, 30 percent in the mid-income bracket, and 20 percent in the low-income bracket as described in the NRB national sample.

[6] Fourteen percent of main caregivers and 11 percent of their partners in the survey left school with no school qualifications compared with 33 percent of the working-age population during the 1980s. Twenty-eight percent of main caregivers and 30 percent of their partners left school with Higher School Certificate/Bursary compared with 15 percent entering the 7th form during the same period (New Zealand Official Yearbook, 1996, p. 202).

[7] The 1991 census data (Davey & Callister, 1994) shows 48 percent of women in 2-parent families not in paid work, compared with 38 percent in this study. We have higher numbers of women in 2-parent families working part time: 42 percent, compared with 23 percent in the 1991 census. Our proportion of 2-parent families where both parents are working full time is 17 percent (14 percent of the women who were the main caregivers) compared with 18 percent in the 1991 census. We have fewer families where both partners are unemployed: 3 percent, compared with the census figure of 14 percent. Nineteen percent of the sole-parent mothers in our survey were working full time, compared with 7 percent in the 1991 census, and 32 percent were working part time compared with 6 percent in the 1991 census. Eighty-one percent of the partners of mothers with preschool children were working full time compared with 90 percent in the 1991 census.

[8] Maori population in the Wellington region for the total Maori population ethnic group was 5 percent (Statistics New Zealand, 1992, pp. 16–18).

Pacific Island origins. Figures for the other ethnic groupings were insufficient for use in statistical analysis and for the most part separate data for these groups have not been reported.

Early Childhood Centre Profiles

After an initially slow response from centres we received a total of 44 completed profile documents. We have information about another 13 centres which were also part of the main study. In total we have profile information on 57 of the 66 centres which had children in the survey. Much of the profile data on ECS programmes is included in the main-study report.[9] Table 1 summarises details of responses from the centres.

Table 1

Numbers of Centres Responding to Centre Profile

	Kindergarten	Playcentre	Childcare
Profiles completed	24	9	11
In both main study/survey	4	3	6
Refused	6	0	12
Centre closed	-	-	2
Did not participate in survey or main study	7	6	20
Total ECSs in area	41	18	51

Other ECSs

No Family Day Care schemes or Pacific Island Language Nests were asked to complete a profile for the survey. Because of the small numbers of these types of ECSs, all of those in the geographic area covered by the study were already included in the main study.[10]

The Analysis

The survey concentrates on the quantitative presentation of data. In preparing this report cross tabulation has been used to describe the data and the relationships between children's perceived competencies in the context of family resources and activities and children's experiences of early childhood services. Differences between groups or related to family characteristics such as income are reported only if they have no more than a 5 percent probability of occurring by chance or, if they are marginally above this, they are then reported as indicative findings. Where appropriate, comparisons are made between the survey results and the findings of the main study to see whether, by using a larger sample, we can confirm the trends shown in the main study.

[9] Wylie, Thompson, & Kerslake Hendricks, 1996, pp. 79–94.

[10] Attendance at either of these 2 services constituted 1 percent of total ECS attendance in this survey. Four children were enrolled in Family Day Care programmes, and 6 attended a Pacific Island Language Nest.

Summary

This report describes the family characteristics, circumstances, and activities of the 767 sample children and their early childhood experiences. We first interviewed their parents when the children were nearly 5 or, in some instances, had just had their fifth birthday. A subsample of these children has been selected for inclusion in the main study, joining it at the age of 8, and we hope to follow them through until they reach adolescence.

We also look at parents' perceptions of the ECS contribution made to their child's development and explore associations with some of the structural variables underpinning the children's ECS experiences.

Chapters 2 and 3 of this report describe the family circumstances and resources of the children in the survey. Chapter 4 outlines the children's ECS attendance and experience. Chapter 5 focuses on the children's competencies. Chapter 6 looks at the structural variables such as group size and level of staff training and remuneration of some of the ECSs attended by the survey children in their last year before going to school.

We conclude by drawing these different threads together, looking particularly at the consistencies in these survey results and making comparisons with the Competent Children main-study results.

CHAPTER 2

FAMILY RESOURCES, EDUCATION, AND AMBITIONS FOR THEIR CHILD'S FUTURE

We asked survey parents about their income, occupation, and educational attainment. We also asked them to tell us about the level of education that they wanted their children to have. Family income has long been associated, in research done in New Zealand and overseas, with differences in educational achievement. In the main study, family income was linked to differences in children's competency levels, in particular literacy and mathematics. Similar patterns showed up in the main study for parental occupation and education. This chapter examines whether the data collected from survey parents is consistent with the main-study findings.

Household Composition

Forty-three percent of the survey children lived in households with 4 people in them. Thirty percent were living in households with 5 or 6 members in them. Nine percent were living in households with 6 members and 4 percent were living in households ranging from 7 to 10 members. Survey children tended to live in a household with at least 3 other people. About one-third of Pacific Island children lived with at least 6 other people, as did 17 percent of the Maori and Asian children and 12 percent of the Pakeha/European children.

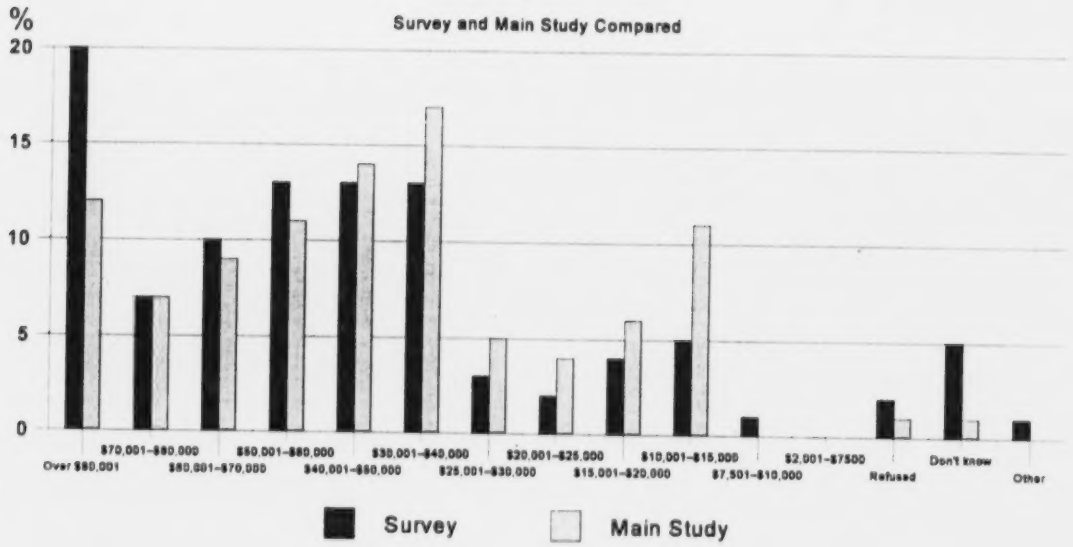
Family Income

We asked parents or guardians to indicate the pre-tax income bracket which fitted their family. Figure 2 shows the income distribution for survey parents compared with main-study parents. There are more families proportionately in the highest-income bracket we use for analysis (over $60,000), 37 percent compared with those in the main study (28 percent), and fewer in the 2 lower-income brackets (under $30,000, 17 percent compared with the main study, 26 percent). The distribution of those on middle incomes, $30,000–$60,000, is about the same (39 percent for survey families compared with 42 percent in the main study).[11]

[11] Highest-income bracket: $60,000 and over; middle income/mid- to high-income bracket: $30–60,000; lower income/mid- to low-income bracket: $20–30,000; lowest income bracket: under $20,000.

Figure 2

Family Income



Similar to the findings of the main study, this survey found that the majority of sole-parent households (81 percent) had annual incomes of $20,000 or less, compared with 10 percent of the 2-parent households.[12] Families in the lowest income bracket (under $20,000) comprised Pakeha/European, (65 percent), Maori, (22 percent), Pacific Island (16 percent), Asian (3 percent), and other European (3 percent).[13]

Salary or wages were the main income source for 75 percent of the survey families. Nineteen percent were self-employed. Ten percent received a state benefit, and 6 percent, family support. About 5 percent of the families said that they had more than one source of income. Comparable figures for the main study were salary or wages as the main income source for 70 percent, 20 percent were self-employed, 18 percent received a state benefit, and 15 percent, family support. Twenty-eight percent of the main-study families relied on more than one source of income. Given the comparable proportions for salary and self-employment, the large difference in family reliance on more than one income source may reflect the higher numbers in the main study receiving state benefits, and if so, may point to an interesting difference for this group.

Over 80 percent of those on incomes over $30,000 said that wages or salary were their major sources of income compared with 63 percent of those earning under $30,000 and 21 percent of those with incomes less than $20,000. Twenty-one percent of those in the $20,000–$30,000 bracket received government income, through family support funds or a state benefit. State benefits were the principal income source for the lowest-income group (63 percent). Forty-three percent also relied on family support. Twenty-two percent of families with incomes over $60,000 were self-employed as were 18 percent of those on incomes over $30,000, 27 percent of those with incomes

[12] Although showing statistically significant associations the numbers in sole-parent extended families (N=21) and reconstituted families (N=17) are small, and care needs to be taken when interpreting results for these family groups.

[13] Families describing themselves as Other European were those migrating to New Zealand from the United Kingdom and Continental Europe and whose children were first-generation New Zealanders.

under $30,000, and 5 percent of those in the lowest income bracket.

Not surprisingly, since 80 percent of the sole parents fell into the lowest-income bracket, state benefits were the major source of their family income: 61 percent. Twenty-seven percent also received family support. Twenty-three percent gave salary or wages as their main source of income; none were self-employed.

There were some differences in the proportions of wages and salary and self-employment as major income sources when compared across ethnic groups. Maori families were less likely to gain income from wages and salary (60 percent) than Pakeha/European families (76 percent) or from self-employment (8 percent compared with 20 percent). A quarter of the Maori families in our survey and 20 percent of the Pacific Island families received a state benefit, compared with 9 percent of the Pakeha/European families. This reflects higher rates of unemployment and sole parentage amongst these 2 groups.

Three percent of mothers in families in the highest-income bracket had no school qualification compared with 35 percent of mothers in the lowest-income bracket. Thirty-one percent of mothers in the families with the highest income had left school with Higher School Certificate/Bursary compared with 2 percent of those receiving the lowest incomes. When we looked at mother's education there was a definite link between higher educational attainment and the upper family income brackets.

The gaps between family income levels at the high and low ends are quite wide. These gaps have implications for the resources available to children, and, as we shall see, parents' perceptions of their children's levels of competency.[14]

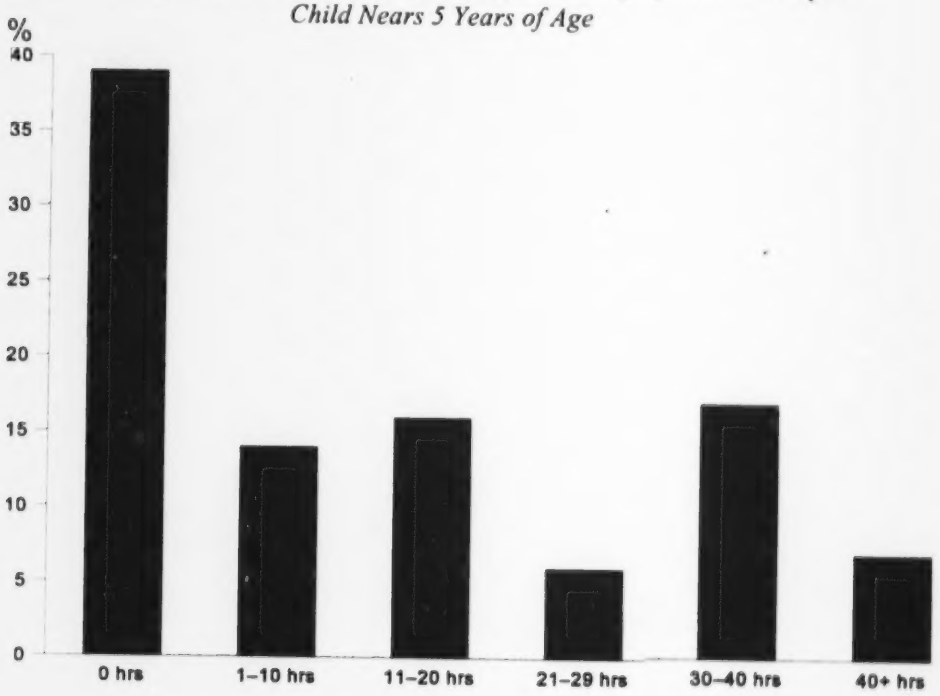
Parental Work

Sixty-one percent of the main caregivers (who were usually mothers) in our survey were in paid employment: 24 percent in full-time, and 36 percent in part-time or casual employment. One percent who worked varied hours on contract work and the like could not say whether they worked part time or full time. Seventy percent of those in full-time employment worked between 30 and 40 hours a week and 30 percent worked over 40 hours. Just over four-fifths of the part-time or casual workers worked 20 hours or less a week: 40 percent worked up to 10 hours and 43 percent between 11 and 20 hours a week. The remaining 17 percent worked between 21 and 29 hours per week.

[14] *See* chapter 5, Wylie, Thompson, & Kerslake Hendricks (1996).

Figure 3

Main Caregiving Parents' Hours of Weekly Paid Employment as Sample Child Nears 5 Years of Age



The pattern for those not working, or working 20 or less hours a week, is similar to that shown in the main study. There are some differences as the hours of work were higher for survey parents, 23 percent, working over 20 hours and up to 40 hours per week compared with around 12 percent of the main-study parents. These differences may account too for some of the differences that we have seen earlier in family income. Twice as many main-study parents (15 percent) worked over 40 hours per week as did survey parents (7 percent).

As in the main study, the clearest association between survey family characteristics and the main caregiving parent's paid-employment status was with family income. Sixty-four percent of those whose families were in the lowest-income group were not in paid employment. The majority of those who were employed in this income group worked part time or casually. Five percent worked full time. The full-time employment rate of the main caregiver amongst those families earning over $60,000 was 28 percent, compared with 21 percent amongst those whose family income was between $30,000–$60,000 and 18 percent for those in the $20,000–$30,000 income bracket.

To turn the figures around and analyse family income by the main caregiving parent's paid-work status, 27 percent of those who were not in paid work were in the low-income groups, 14 percent of those working part time, and 7 percent of those working full time. As we found in the main study, while employment of a family's main caregiving parent is clearly related to family income, it is not a guarantee of boosting family income beyond $30,000.

Just under half the sole parents were not employed: 48 percent, (sole-parent extended 52 percent) as were 38 percent of mothers from 2-parent families. Nineteen percent of sole parents were working full time, the same proportion of the main caregiving parents in 2-parent families.

More than half (59 percent) of the main caregivers in reconstituted families were working full time; 12 percent part time. There is little to differentiate the other family groups regarding the take-up of part-time or casual work. Forty-two percent of parents in 2-parent families worked part time as did 36 percent of those in 2-parent extended families, 32 percent of sole parents, and 33 percent of parents in sole-parent extended families.[15] We had found in the main study that 2-parent families appeared to have greater part-time employment participation than sole-parent families. However the differences we found in this survey among family groups were not significant enough to support a like conclusion.

Gender, however, does make a difference. Most of the male main caregivers (79 percent) were working full time, 9 percent were working part time and 12 percent were not in paid employment. The majority of the women were either not in paid employment (41 percent) or were working part time (40 percent). Full-time employment was 19 percent.

Seventy-seven percent of the male partners of respondents were working full time, 5 percent part time, and 7 percent were not in paid employment. Sixty-six percent worked more than 40 hours per week. Three of the male main caregivers had more than one job, as did one of the male partners. This is in contrast to the much higher number of women with more than one job: 36 (28 main caregivers and 8 female partners). A similar pattern was found in the main study.

Eighty percent of partners of the main caregiving parent in Pakeha/European families were working full time compared with fifty-five percent of Maori families. Fewer partners in Pakeha/European families (6 percent) and Maori families (9 percent) were not working compared with Pacific Island families (19 percent). More partners in Pacific Island families were working part time (17 percent) compared with Pakeha/European families (4 percent).

Thirteen percent of families had both parents working full time. Four percent of the parents in 2-parent families had no parent in paid employment, and 1 percent had both parents working part time or in temporary jobs.

Table 2

Parents' Paid Work Occupations—Survey and Main Study Compared

	Female Occupation		Male Occupation	
	(N=710) Survey %	(N=307) Main %	(N=583) Survey %	(N=260) Main %
Professional	20	17	42	42
Skilled/trades	25	26	34	41
Unskilled	13	16	6	10
Not working	41	41	18	6

There is a close correspondence between the occupations of the survey and main-study parents, particularly the women in both groups, and the survey and main-study men employed in the professions. However, as we have seen earlier more survey than main-study families are in the highest-income bracket. This may reflect the differences in educational achievement.

[15] Care needs to be taken in interpreting these results as there are small numbers in some of these family groupings (sole-parent extended, N=21, reconstituted families, N=17).

Twenty-two percent of the female main caregivers in the survey were employed in the professions compared with 52 percent of the male main caregivers. When we analyse partners' occupations, we can see that income is clearly linked to occupational status. Sixty-two percent of those in the highest family income bracket were in the professions compared with 39 percent of those with incomes between $30,000 and $60,000. Thirty-three percent of those in the highest-income bracket were in skilled occupations compared with 45 percent of those with middle incomes.

Partners in Pakeha/European families (43 percent) were more likely to be found in the professions than partners in Maori families (23 percent). Proportionately more partners in Pacific Island families had unskilled jobs (32 percent) than did Maori (11 percent) or Pakeha/European partners (5 percent).

There were also significant associations between education and occupational status. Thirty-nine percent of those leaving school with a Higher School Certificate/Bursary or equivalent were in the professions compared with 18 percent of those with Sixth Form Certificate and 4 percent of those who left school with no qualifications. Thirty percent of those leaving school with Higher School Certificate/Bursary were to be found in the skilled occupations compared with 21 percent of those who left school with no qualifications and 18 percent who left school with Higher School Certificate/Bursary. Thirty percent of those in unskilled occupations left school with no qualifications compared with 11 percent of those with Sixth Form Certificate and 7 percent of those with Higher School Certificate/Bursary. In summation the pattern is evident: those leaving school with the highest qualifications are more likely to be working in the professions and those with no school qualifications in unskilled jobs.

Parental Education

More men left school with higher qualifications than women. Thirty-nine percent of the male main caregivers had completed Higher School Certificate/Bursary or equivalent, as had 35 percent of the male partners. Comparable figures for women were 27 percent of main caregivers and, of the partners, 26 percent. A higher proportion of the women had no school qualification. Post-school, the expected patterns of more men having a trades qualification, and conversely more women having teaching or nursing qualifications, were found. The pattern as regards tertiary education is similar to that seen at school level. More men have higher tertiary qualifications than women.

Figure 4

Main Caregiving Parent Education—Survey and Main-study Comparisons

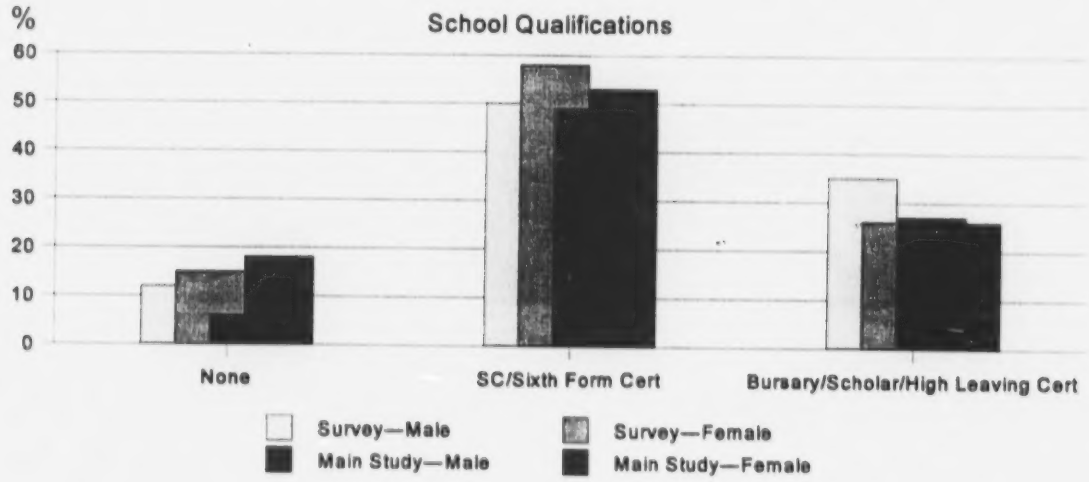
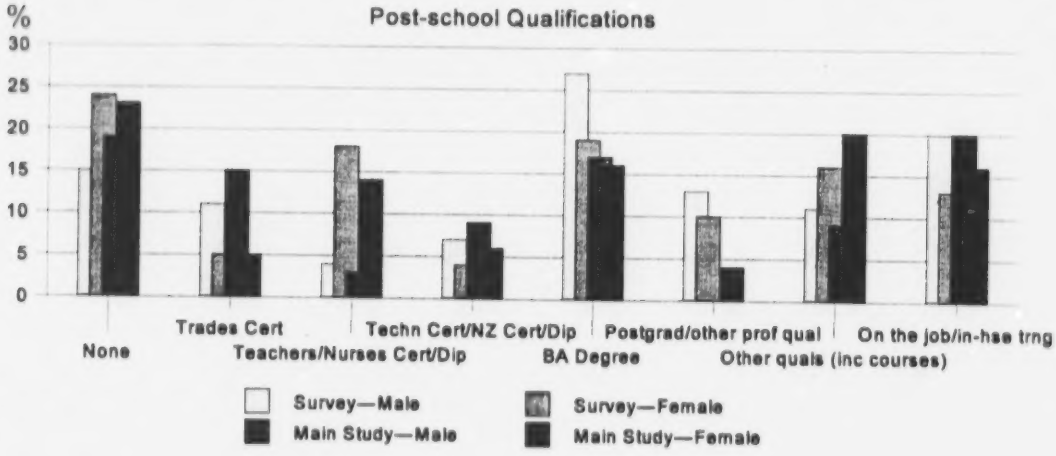


Figure 5

Main Caregiving Parent Education—Survey and Main-study Comparisons



A comparison of survey parents with those in the main study shows that proportionately more survey parents achieved degree, postgraduate, or other professional qualifications such as those for accountancy. Differences between the levels of parental educational attainment appear to be linked with the differences in income that we have seen earlier (more survey parents have incomes in the highest-income bracket). As we will see throughout this report this link between income and educational attainment forms part of a recurrent pattern, as it does for the population at large.

Sole parents (30 percent) and the main caregiver in 2-parent extended families (25 percent) were more likely to have left school with no qualifications than the main caregiver in 2-parent families (11 percent) and, correspondingly, to have not received any education since leaving school (sole parents 33 percent, and the main caregiver in 2-parent extended families, 36 percent, compared with

the main caregiver in 2-parent families, 20 percent).

There is a significant gap between results for Maori and Pacific Island parents and Pakeha/European parents. Compared with Maori (41 percent) and Pacific Island parents (28 percent), fewer Pakeha/European parents (13 percent) left school without a qualification. The pattern repeats itself post-school where 47 percent of Maori and 43 percent of Pacific Island parents did not receive further education compared with 20 percent of Pakeha/European parents. Partners' education follows similar patterns. As may be expected, there is an association between higher incomes and higher post-school qualifications.

We asked our main caregiving parents whether they had had a chance to receive as much education as they wanted. Twenty-two percent said that they had not had as much opportunity as they would have liked. Not surprisingly, lack of opportunity was most pronounced for those with no school qualification: 52 percent. Twenty-two percent of those who had achieved only School Certificate and 8 percent of those with seventh form qualifications also felt they had not had as much education as they would have liked.

There is a strong association between educational opportunity and income. Eighty-seven percent of those in the highest-income bracket thought they had had sufficient educational opportunity compared with 73 percent of those on middle incomes, 57 percent in the lower-income bracket and 63 percent in the lowest.

There was also, as we found in the main study, a strong association with ethnicity. While 38 percent of the Pacific Island main caregiving parents felt they had not received as much education as they wanted, and 33 percent of Maori, only 21 percent of Pakeha/European and proportionately the same number of Asian parents felt a lack of opportunity. Sole parents (32 percent) felt a greater sense of educational deprivation than did respondents in 2-parent households (21 percent).

Parents' Educational Ambitions for Their Children

Just over half of the parents said they wanted their child to go as far in their education as they wanted to, compared with three-quarters of those in the main study. But more parents specified tertiary study: 43 percent specifically mentioned completion of tertiary study compared with 29 percent of main-study parents. Only 4 percent (main study, 6 percent) thought the end of secondary school was sufficient education for their child to receive. The higher the income, the greater the proportion of parents wanting their child to complete a tertiary qualification, ranging from 50 percent of those in the highest-income bracket to 32 percent of those in the lowest-income bracket. There is a similar difference between family make-up and parents' ambitions. Parents in 2-parent households (45 percent) were more likely to want their child to receive tertiary education than those in sole-parent households (29 percent). Not surprisingly, parents with school qualifications were more likely to specify tertiary education than those with no school qualifications; 52 percent of those with Higher Leaving Certificate/Bursary, 42 percent of those with School Certificate/Sixth Form Certificate compared with 24 percent with no school qualification. There was no association between the child's gender and parents' responses.

All but 2 of the parents whose children were still attending an ECS had decided which primary school their child would go to when they turned 5. Just over a third of the survey parents had decided on their child's secondary school (36 percent), and 7 percent were considering 2 or more schools. We asked for their reasons in making their choice of primary and secondary school, in open-ended questions. The next table sets out the reasons for both primary and secondary school choice given by survey and main-study parents.

Table 3

Factors in Parental Choice of Schools—Survey and Main Study Compared

Factor	Primary		Secondary % of those already decided	
	(N=767) Survey %	(N=307) Main %	(N=276) Survey %	(N=115) Main %
Proximity to home	68	52	50	48
Reputation	44	42	71	63
Previous family attendance	42	52	36	41
School type	21	15	49	32
Peer group/friends	18	-	7	-
School facilities	16	10	9	10
School/class size	10	10	9	3
Discipline/school climate	13	11	12	11
Curriculum/activities	12	14	20	14
School mix	5	-	11	-
Cost	2	1	3	5

The main factors found in the main study were also found here: reputation, previous family attendance, and location, although they were not necessarily given the same weighting.

School reputation was important to parents at the primary school level and was again dominant at secondary level, thus reiterating the findings in the main study that many parents make a decision based on the school's perceived quality rather than look for differences in curriculum or activities.

There were some indicative differences relating to family characteristics which emerged in analysing parental responses to the choice of primary school. Sixty-five percent of those in reconstituted families and 45 percent of those in 2-parent families thought the school's reputation generally was important compared with 30 percent of sole parents. Ethnicity also led to some indicative differences. Reputation (47 percent) and school facilities (16 percent) were proportionately more important to Pakeha/European families than to Maori (28 percent and 6 percent). Proximity was mentioned more by Maori parents (80 percent) when compared with Asian (59 percent), and attendance at the school by the child's peers is mentioned more by Asian parents (29 percent) than by Pakeha/European families (19 percent). Pacific Island families (34 percent) were more concerned than Pakeha/European (20 percent) with the school type. Maori parents were more concerned than Pakeha/European with the school mix (12 percent compared with 5 percent). Parental expectations may be shaped by their ability or capacity to make choices or it may be that some parents are unconcerned about the choices available.

There were no associations between those who had made a decision on their child's secondary school as regards income, family composition, parents' education, or gender. When it comes to reasons for choosing a secondary school for their child, reputation is of greater importance for Maori (34 percent) than for Pacific Island parents (15 percent). Curriculum gains proportionately more mention from Maori (15 percent) when compared with Pakeha/European parents (7 percent), although the numbers giving this reason are small.

State primary schools were the choice of 83 percent of the parents, integrated schools 15 percent, and private schools 2 percent. Sixty-four percent of the schools chosen had a decile ranking between 8 and 10, 13 percent between 6 and 7, and 23 percent 5 and under. The higher-decile schools are represented here at twice their national occurrence, but closer to their occurrence in the survey area (55 percent of the survey area primary schools were decile 8–10 schools, 22 percent were decile 6–7, and 23 percent decile 5 or less).

Choice of ECS

As we shall see in more detail in chapter 4, choice of ECS at the 4-year-old level was similarly guided by the reputation of the ECS, its suitable location, and also by personal reasons such as attendance by other family members. As we found in the main study, what is different about the reasons given for ECS choice and primary school choice are that cost, the ECS suiting the parents' needs, and opportunities for parental involvement or contact with other adults were also sizable factors in parental choice of early childhood educational setting for their child.

This comparison of reasons for parental choice at different levels of the education system signals the difference in government funding for schools and early childhood education. Early childhood education is more reliant on parental financial contributions. Its role in parental and family support is also more pronounced.

Parents' Views of Financial Responsibility for Tertiary Education

In the light of contemporary policy debate and decisions about increasing students' share of funding tertiary education, we were asked by the Ministry of Education to include a section on student payment of fees. Survey participants found this an awkward set of questions to answer. Fifty-seven percent did not respond to the first question, which asked parents to nominate the percentage of tertiary fees they thought students should pay, and 60 percent did not (or could not) give the amount that they thought they might be able to contribute in percentage terms. Nonetheless, there are some indications in their answers to an open-ended question of both the role they see for the state in tertiary education, and their own belief in the value of education.

Twenty percent of parents said students should pay no fees. Another 17 percent said student fees should depend on the student's income and 14 percent said student fees should be minimal. Fourteen percent had no idea what percentage was realistic or appropriate. Three percent felt it should depend on the course taken by the student, 2 percent on the student's performance, and 2 percent commented that they would rather pay higher taxes to keep student fees free.

Three hundred and four parents answered our question on the percentage of fees they themselves would be able to pay after their child finished secondary school. Forty-five percent of the respondents said that fees should remain at, or be less than, the estimated 18 percent then (in 1994) contributed by students towards meeting the costs of their education. Of these, 19 percent said that fees should be set at 10 percent or less of the total cost. Sixteen percent thought that they could pay up to 25 percent of the cost and a further 17 percent thought that they could pay up to half the total cost. Sixteen percent thought that they could meet the full cost.

Summary

Our findings established a strong linkage between income and educational opportunity. Parents on lower incomes were more likely to feel that they had not had the chance to get as much education as they wanted to receive. Sole parents felt the greatest sense of educational deprivation along with Pacific Island and Maori parents.

The biggest differences in the family resources available to the survey children were related to family income and, linked to that, parental employment. Survey families were on the whole more affluent than those in the main study. Children from sole-parent families were likely to be from less well-resourced families in these terms than others.

Education was valued by the parents. Over half of those with low or no school qualifications would have liked the chance for more education themselves; and again more than half the parents had high ambitions for their children's tertiary education. Only a few parents thought that their child's education should end with the completion of secondary school, but over a third of low-income families thought finding money for tertiary education would be a problem. If family savings are needed to ensure access to tertiary education, then children from low-income, sole-parent families are likely to miss out.

CHAPTER 3

FAMILY LIVING—THE CHILD AT HOME

We asked the main caregiving parents questions about the current composition of their family, their children's relations with non-custodial parents if applicable, and about the significant events in their children's lives. We also explored children's home activities. In the main study we found that children's engagement in home activities had led to significant differences in the level of competency children attained. In this chapter we compare the at-home activities of the survey and the main-study children. We also compare survey and main-study parental responses to children having difficulties with home-based activities and offer some insights into how survey parents interacted with, and gave guidance to, their children.

Family Structures

The families of 767 children, 385 girls and 382 boys, participated in the survey. Most children lived in households with at least 2 adults present. Two-parent households numbered 618 (81 percent); 44 children (6 percent) lived in 2-parent extended families, 21 (3 percent) with one parent in an extended family setting, and 17 (2 percent) in reconstituted families of one birth parent and partner. Four sole parents lived with flatmates. Only 56 children (7 percent) lived with one parent alone. A small number (7) were cared for by other family members including grandparents, an aunt, and a cousin. Five of these family members had formal custody, one from birth, and for others, the duration of custody ranged from 9 months to 2 years. Two children lived informally with their family caregivers during weekdays and sometimes lived with their parents during weekends.

Over 90 percent of the children living in 2-parent households and around 75 percent of children in sole-parent and reconstituted families had at least one sibling. Twenty of the children included in the survey had a twin brother or sister; not all of the latter were part of the survey.

Ethnic and Language Background

English was the main language for all but 37 of the 767 survey children. Of these 37 children, 19 spoke Samoan, 8 Maori, and the remainder a variety of Asian or continental European languages.

Thirteen percent of the children spoke a second language, and another 48 percent knew a few words or phrases. Maori was the most popular second language that the children were acquainted with or spoke (43 percent of speakers of a second language). Eleven percent of second-language speakers spoke Cantonese, 6 percent Mandarin, 5 percent spoke English, another 5 percent Samoan, and 1 percent Cook Island Maori.

The highest proportion of those with second-language knowledge was found amongst Pacific Island children (60 percent). Forty-one percent of Indian/Asian children, 20 percent of the Maori children, and 6 percent of Pakeha/European children knew a language other than English. Sometimes this knowledge amounted to only a few words.

These findings are comparable with those of the main study. There is very little difference in the distribution patterns of children's first language or knowledge of another language between the 2 samples.

Change and Constancy in Children's Lives

Seventy-seven percent of the parents we interviewed said that there had been changes to the child's life over the past 3 to 4 years. Nearly half the children (46 percent) had experienced a change in household composition—a new member of the family (30 percent of the children had a younger brother and 28 percent had a younger sister)—or a change in those members. Thirteen percent of the children had experienced the frequent or long-term absence of a parent, and 7 percent had lost a family member or friend. Few of the caregiving parents mentioned that either they or their partners had changed their jobs (8 percent). Nine parents mentioned financial difficulty, and 14 felt that they were facing increased demands from other family members.

Three percent of the children were said to have undergone a major health setback, accident, or illness, but there is a big discrepancy between parents' spontaneous recollections about the incidence of change and their subsequent responses to specific questions about child health and other occurrences. These responses may relate to the "now" rather than the past. For example, only 12 percent mentioned a change in the child's ECS although the number of children who changed their ECS was far greater, around 70 percent, again indicating that what parents recalled were the most recent changes. Although most of the children were 5 years old, that is to say school age, when we interviewed the parents, only 6 percent mentioned the child had started school.

Children from reconstituted families were more likely to have moved house (82 percent) and together with sole-parent and sole-parent extended families were much more likely to have experienced the frequent or long-term absence of a parent. Only a handful (20) of the parents in our 2-parent households were absent for any length of time. We found similar patterns of parental absence in the main study where 55 percent of children in sole-parent families had experienced parental absence compared with 8 percent of children in 2-parent households. Comparable figures for survey children are 64 percent and 2 percent respectively. There were proportionately more changes in the size of reconstituted and extended families reflecting the movement of adults as well as the addition of children to the household. The composition of sole-parent families did not change as much as did all of the other household groups (27 percent), whereas nearly half the 2-parent families and more than half of all other family groupings experienced a change. Children with parents in the highest-income bracket (54 percent) moved more often than did those in the middle-income bracket (38 percent). Forty-six percent of parents in the lowest-income bracket also moved house. As in the main study, more families (37 percent) in the lowest-income bracket experienced the frequent or long-term absence of a parent compared with 3 percent of families in the highest-income bracket.

Milestones

We asked how old the children were when they took their first steps and said their first words. Most parents had a good idea of when their child started walking; only 14 said they did not know. The ages of children taking their first steps ranged from between 7 months to 3.5 years, with a median age of 12 months. By the age of 15 months over 90 percent of the children were walking. However it was more difficult for parents to pinpoint the moment when their child said her or his first words; a third of the parents could not. Children were said to have started as early as 3 months and as late as 5 years. Of those who did respond, the median age was 11 months. Over 90 percent of these children had said their first word by the age of 18 months. This difference between remembering the time of first steps and first words fits with the greater level of parents' confidence about their

child's level of competency on motor skills than on social and communicative skills.

Children's Character

We asked parents to tell us about their child. Children were described as being energetic, confident, dramatic, outgoing, sociable, mature, articulate, talkative, healthy, secure, affectionate, honest, loving, caring, compassionate, nurturing, helpful, self-assured, assertive, intelligent, imaginative, brave, busy, protective towards siblings, happy, thoughtful, and well behaved. Some were keen gardeners, some liked cooking or had strengths in art work. Some were "outdoorsy", good all-rounders, sporty, active, daring, liked animals, and had a good sense of humour. They were sometimes hard to gauge, naughty, "stroppy", mischievous, hyperactive, attention seeking, noisy, aggressive towards siblings, had poor concentration, were perfectionists, finicky, poor eaters, had a mind of their own, and needed guidance. Others were sensitive, nervy, frail, insecure, unsettled, fairly placid, found it difficult to adjust to new situations, and were slow to warm up. There were "typical boys", and "real girls".

Table 4 compares parents' portrayal of their children with those portrayed in the main study. They are very similar, with the exception of weakness: main-study parents were more likely to mention these than were the survey parents. Perhaps this reflects the more comprehensive nature of the main-study interview, or the fact that it was done face to face rather than by phone.

Table 4

Parents' Portrayal of their Children—Survey and Main-study Comparison

Trait	Main Study (N=307) %	Survey (N=767) %
Strengths		
Good social-emotional skills	79	70
Good language/thinking skills	61	51
Independent	43	38
Good physical skills	42	34
Happy, confident	37	45
Imaginative, creative	22	17
Helpful	12	12
Good musician/dancer	11	16
Neutral (both strengths and weaknesses)		
Sensitive/shy	24	27
Strong-willed	23	24
Reasonable social-emotional skills	16	15
Boisterous, sometimes rough	14	10
Organiser, sometimes bossy	12	5
Weaknesses		
Poor social-emotional skills	27	13
Too independent or dependent	15	5
Spoilt	4	1
Impatient	4	2
Poor language/thinking skills	3	4
Poor physical skills	3	4

We used 3 groupings (children's strengths, neutral traits and weaknesses) to categorise the parents' perceptions. The parental responses seen above are spontaneous descriptions of their children. Children's physical attributes are less highly rated here than their social and cognitive competencies. When asked later during the interview to specifically assess their child's social, communicative, and physical competencies,[16] we found that parents' views of their child's social skills remained similarly positive but they gave an even more positive perspective of their child's communicative abilities and mastery of the physical environment.

Some gender differences showed up in parental responses. The most significant of these is the parental response to children's physical development: 40 percent of boys and 28 percent of girls were thought to have good physical skills. However, girls had greater strengths in music and dance, 19 percent compared with 13 percent of the boys. More girls (74 percent) were thought to have good social-emotional skills than boys (66 percent), but there was almost no difference when it came to parents' perceptions of poor social development. Boys were, however, seen as being almost twice as likely to be boisterous and rough as girls.

[16] *See* chapter 5, "Children's Competencies".

Health

Thirty-four percent[17] of the children were said to have had a serious illness or accident requiring hospitalisation; 6 percent had had a congenital problem. Thirty-six children (5 percent) had been in hospital overnight for tests or treatment of a fracture. More parents in the highest-income bracket said that their child had never been hospitalised than did those in the lowest (72 percent compared with 63 percent). However, there are no significant differences relative to sole-parenthood and the incidence of children's hospital admissions. Fewer children of 2-parent families were admitted to hospital for a serious illness or accident than those in reconstituted families (28 percent compared with 59 percent). Ethnicity made no significant difference to hospital admissions. Gender did make a significant difference: 34 percent of boys had spent some time in hospital compared with 25 percent of girls.

Twenty-three percent of children continued to visit a specialist. Eleven percent had checks on vision or hearing. Six percent were being monitored for language development, 4 percent had growth problems, and 2 percent were visiting specialists for the management of emotional difficulties. There is a fairly even distribution of specialist attendance among all income and family groupings. However, more boys than girls saw a specialist (27 percent compared with 19 percent).

Ninety-five percent of parents said that their child had had their hearing checked, and 88 percent of the children had had their vision tested. Free checks are done at ECSs and children who were not tested may have missed out accidentally due to absence on a particular day. Over all the high percentage of checks done corresponds to the children's regular attendance at ECS.

Seventy-seven percent had no hearing problems when checked, and 11 percent had a problem which had been corrected. Another 11 percent were being monitored on an ongoing basis. Ten children had suffered mild to severe hearing loss.

Eighty-six percent of the children who had had their vision tested had no eyesight problems; 8 percent were having their eyesight monitored, 3 percent were wearing glasses, and 8 children (1 percent) had problems which had been subsequently corrected.

Whether or not a child had had a hearing or vision check was indicatively linked to some differences in income levels, and ethnic groups. More Pakeha/European children had had their vision checked than Maori children (90 percent compared with 80 percent). More children in the mid-to-high-income brackets had had their hearing checked compared with those in the low-to-middle-income bracket (97 percent compared with 86 percent). However, there were no associations between socioeconomic, family, ethnic, or gender groups as regards problem detection or correction.

Family and Home-based Activities

We wanted to find out what access children had to a range of activities in which learning takes place. We also wanted to know more about children's skill acquisition through home-based learning opportunities.

[17] When asked about changes in children's lives, only 3 percent of parents reported that their child had undergone a major health setback—accident or illness.

Table 5

Family Activities With Survey Children—Survey and Main Study Compared

Activity	Survey (N=767) %	Main Study (N=307) %
Physical	87	90
Socialising with others	71	66
Exploration/special events	62	58
Routine housework	53	60
Literacy-related	45	38
TV/movies	31	28
Mathematics/science-related	26	24
Aesthetic-creative	26	14
Socio/dramatic	15	9
Music/dance	15	9
Church/community	13	19
Eating out	11	15
Animals	7	18
ECS-related	5	5
Related to parents' work	4	7

The top 6 family activities replicate those in the main study. Our families, however, have a higher incidence of activities related to the arts. Eating out and activities involving pets have less frequent mention by the survey families. Ten parents said they did not do much as a family and 3 said that they did not enjoy being with their family.

For the most part families liked going for walks together, going to parks and swimming pools, and generally participating in unstructured outdoor leisure activities. Social activities, visiting friends and family members, and playing with other children were also popular pastimes unaffected by family, ethnic, or socioeconomic status.

Family structure made for some differences in what families were doing. Sole-parent families engaged in less exploration, outings, and special events than 2-parent families (50 percent compared with 64 percent). Two-parent families were twice as likely to engage in mathematics/science-related activities than sole-parent families. Extended families were two to three times more likely to take part in church and community activities.

As was found in the main study, church attendance was highest among Pacific Island families. Almost half the Pacific Island families took part in church activities compared with Pakeha/ European and European migrant families (10 percent). Physical activities were less significant for Pacific Island families (74 percent) than Pakeha/European families (90 percent). Pakeha/European families were more likely to engage in literacy-related activities than Maori families (46 percent compared with 28 percent) and more likely (64 percent) to take part in exploration-based activities (trips/special events) than Pacific Island families (36 percent).

Family income proved, as it had in the main study, to be statistically significant when looking at parental responses for some activities. Our findings confirm those of the main study on key differences related to family income levels and children's engagement in cognitive activities. High-income families (51 percent) were more likely to take part in literacy-related activities than those on very low incomes (37 percent), and mathematics/science-related activities (29 percent compared with 17 percent).

High-income families were more likely (38 percent) to watch television or go to movies than families in the middle-to-upper-income bracket (26 percent) and to take part in music and dance activities (20 percent) compared with families in the low-to-middle-income bracket (4 percent). They were also more likely to take part in physical activities than those with medium-to-low and low incomes. Families in the middle-to-upper-income bracket were more likely to go on trips or take part in special events than those in the lowest-income bracket (64 percent compared with 44 percent). Families in the low-to-middle-income bracket were more likely to go to church (20 percent) than those in the highest-income bracket (7 percent).

Girls were more likely to take part in socio/dramatic activities (18 percent) than boys (12 percent) and were more likely to experience music- and dance-related activities (20 percent compared with 9 percent).

There were also some differences associated with mother's school qualifications levels. In the main study, mother's education made a contribution of its own in the literacy and mathematics/ science-related activities even after controlling for family income.

Table 6

Associations Between Mother's Education and Family Activities

Activity	No School Qualification (N=104) %	School Cert (N=161) %	Sixth Form Cert/ UE (N=256) %	Bursary/Scholarship HSC (N=190) %
Physical	84	91	88	89
Socialising with others	68	70	75	69
Routine housework/gardening	*60*	*44*	52	54
Exploration/special events	*50*	54	63	*75*
Literacy-related	*36*	37	45	*52*
TV/movies	27	29	32	35
Mathematics/science-related	*18*	25	24	*32*
Church/community	9	14	16	10
Animals	8	6	8	9
Eating out	10	13	12	11
Aesthetic-creative	19	19	30	26
Socio/dramatic	*7*	16	20	*15*
Music/dance	*8*	13	16	*21*
Related to parents' work	4	3	7	2
ECS/school-related	*11*	6	2	*4*
Do not do much as family	0	2	2	2

Note: Significant differences are shown in italics.

The lower incidence of literacy-related and mathematics/science-related activities in households where the mothers have no school qualification in comparison with those mothers who left school with Higher School Certificate/Bursary is striking. It should be noted that there is also a lower incidence of other activities which could foster children's creative skills and expertise and less experience of exploration or special events. We found a similar pattern in the main study. However, we did not find, as we did in the main study, that there was a significant difference between households with no educational qualifications and those with some, as regards the child's experience of other people beyond the family. And there was a higher incidence of gardening and housework (in which much knowledge and concept building can be experienced) in survey

households where the mother left school without a qualification than in such households in the main study.

Children's Reading Activities

We read parents a list of activities associated with reading that children were likely to do and asked if the children did any (or all) of these things. The majority of children did all of these pre-reading activities.

Table 7

Children's Home Reading Activities

Activity	Survey (N=767) %	Main Study (N=307) %
Looks at books by self	97	94
Asks for favourite books to be read	95	89
Knows that certain sounds go with certain letters	91	75
Plays at reading /pretends to read	89	91
Memorises favourite stories	89	86

When we looked at family resources, we found an income-related trend: the higher the family income, the more likely it was that the child knew that certain sounds went with certain letters. Children from Maori and Pacific Island families were less likely to know that certain sounds went with certain letters; just over 75 percent compared with just over 90 percent for Pakeha/European families. Fewer Pacific Island parents (60 percent) volunteered extra information on children's reading activities compared with Pakeha/European parents (78 percent). Gender had some influence too. Girls (93 percent) were more likely than boys (85 percent) to play at reading. There were no associations between children's home-reading activities and mother's school qualifications.

When we asked if the children did anything with reading that we had not mentioned, 77 percent of parents volunteered additional activities compared with 56 percent of main-study parents. There was quite a wide margin between high- and low-income family responses with just over 60 percent of mid-to-low-income families saying that their children did at least one extra thing compared with 75 percent and above for those in the upper-income bracket. Sixty-six percent of mothers who left school with no qualifications identified at least one extra activity compared with 85 percent of mothers who left school with Higher School Certificate/Bursary, or Scholarship. We received a fairly even response from the parents of boys and girls.

Table 8

Parents' Description of Children's Additional Reading Activities

Activity	(N=767) %
Reads real words	56
Makes up stories from pictures	29
Asks about words	24
Reads signs/brand names/labels	19
Sings/chants alphabet	18
Plays teacher	15
Reads family/friends' names	14
Looks at story while listening to tape	13

The main reading activities reported replicate those in the main study.

In the main study children from families with income levels above $30,000 were more likely to engage in additional home-reading activities. Survey children from homes with incomes above $60,000 (64 percent) and those between $30,000 and $60,000 (55 percent) were more likely to be reading some words than those from homes with an income of between $20,000 and $30,000 (29 percent) or those with an income of less than $20,000 (39 percent). The difference between homes with the highest income and those on low-to-middle incomes was 25 percent.

Fifty-six percent of children of Pakeha/European families read some words compared with 39 percent of children from Pacific Island families. Children from Pacific Island families were more likely to look at a story while listening to a tape (24 percent) compared with 12 percent of children from Pakeha/European families.

Children whose mothers left school with no qualifications (45 percent) were less likely to be reading some words than those whose mothers had left school with Higher School Certificate/ Bursary (67 percent). Playing at being a teacher was more likely to be a pastime for children whose mothers had no school qualifications (21 percent) than for those whose mothers left school with Higher School Certificate/Bursary (12 percent).

Girls were also more likely to play at being a teacher than boys (22 percent compared with 8 percent).

Children's Number Activities

In common with what we found in the main study, most children at this age were counting out loud, counting things, and getting involved in counting activities. Almost all the children knew their age (93 percent) and a high percentage (84 percent) were using numbers when at play, making things, cooking, and generally helping around the house. Seventy-eight percent were singing counting songs and 73 percent were engaged in television, video, or computer programmes and games involving counting. Just over three-quarters of the children were trying to tell the time and about half were talking about fractions. Thirty-three percent of the children were adding or subtracting numbers. Some parents (9) mentioned that their child could count backwards, and 9 children could also count in a language other than English. For the most part gender had no influence over what boys and girls were doing. Girls, however, were more likely to sing counting songs than boys.

Looking at the specific activities, we find some interesting differences which support the

association between the family income levels and the ability of families to provide children with experiential and material resources. Children from high-income families were more likely to get involved with TV/video/computer games involving numbers (77 percent; lowest-income group 63 percent). This difference may possibly be linked with computer ownership. They were also more likely to talk about halves or quarters (65 percent; lowest-income group 41 percent). Children from sole-parent families were less likely to talk about halves and quarters than children from 2-parent families (40 percent compared with 57 percent). In the main study similar findings were reported. Seventy-nine percent of those children from 2-parent families sang number songs compared with 53 percent from reconstituted families. Seventy-eight percent of children from 2-parent families were trying to tell the time compared with 48 percent of children from sole-parent extended families.

Eighty-five percent of the children from Pakeha/European families used numbers when cooking and making things compared with 74 percent of children from Pacific Island families. More Pakeha/European children talked about halves and quarters than Maori children. Getting involved in TV/video/computer programmes or games involving numbers was more likely to occupy children from Asian families (94 percent) than children from Pakeha/European families (74 percent).

Around 65 percent of the children did some other things with numbers. Twenty-four percent recognised numerals on signs and letterboxes and in books, and wrote numerals, 23 percent played number games and liked doing puzzles, and 20 percent knew their phone number or that of a close relative, or were curious about numbers and asked lots of questions. Seventeen percent could recognise money denominations, 11 percent used numbers to describe things, and 8 percent were thought to have an understanding of shapes and patterns. Twenty-four children (3 percent) could multiply and 2 could divide. Another 2 used a calculator.

We did find some differences between particular income groups. Children from the highest-income bracket were more likely to add and subtract numbers (44 percent compared with the mid-to-high-income group 27 percent) and to ask questions (24 percent; mid-to-high-income group 14 percent). Children in families in the low-to-mid-income bracket were more likely to play with games and puzzles than children in families in the lowest bracket (32 percent compared with 14 percent).

Children whose mothers did not complete any school qualifications (29 percent) or those whose mother left school with one or more School Certificate subject (24 percent) were less likely to be adding and subtracting than children whose mothers had Higher School Certificate/Bursary (46 percent). There were no differences associated with the children's gender.

In the main study, family characteristics were clearly associated with parent's responses to the question about whether the child did anything else with numbers. Table 9 compares the survey results with those of the main study.

Table 9

Association of Family Characteristics with Children's Home Numerical Activities—Survey and Main Study Compared

Family Characteristic	Child Does More than the 8 Activities Asked About	
	Survey (N=767) %	Main Study (N=307) %
Household Income		
More than $60,001	74	69
$30,001–60,000	60	54
$20,001–30,000	68	48
Less than $20,000	*48**	*35*
Ethnicity		
Pakeha/European	66	54
Maori	67	49
Pacific Island	*41**	29
Asian	65	-
Other European	64	-
Family Type		
Two-parent	66	56
Two-parent extended	52	-
Sole-parent	64	45
Sole-parent extended	48	-
Reconstituted	71	-
Mother's School Qualifications		
No school qualifications	54	44
School Certificate	56	46
UE	67	56
Bursary/HSC	75	*65*

* significantly different

Parental Response to Children's Difficulty with an Activity

We asked this question to get an indication of parental involvement in children's learning and their style of response to children who were having difficulty trying to do something that they had set out to do for themselves. The responses here follow a similar pattern to that of the main study; comparative figures are given in parentheses. Forty-seven percent of parents (39 percent) would wait for the child to ask for help and 30 percent (21 percent) would keep an eye on things and respond to the child's behavioural cues such as the child's level of frustration if things were going wrong. Twenty-six percent (36 percent) would ask first if the child wanted help, and step in if invited. About 12 percent (19 percent) would step in and help uninvited. Four percent of both survey and main-study parents would complete the project for the child if asked. Two percent of survey parents would simply take it over. Only 11 survey parents would tell the child to give up and only 3 would criticise the child or react negatively. Three percent of main-study parents had negative reactions.

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Analysis of survey family characteristics showed few statistical differences. Parents' responses were almost identical for boys and girls. Two-parent families (49 percent) were nearly twice as likely to wait until the child initiated a request for help than sole-parent families (27 percent). Pacific Island (24 percent) and Maori parents (22 percent) were more likely to take the initiative and help finish the project than Pakeha/European families (10 percent). We found in the main study too that Pacific Island parents were more likely to take the initiative.

Parents' Responses to the Child "Being Difficult"

We attempted to gain some insights into the way parents interacted with their children and provided them with positive and explanatory guidance. We asked respondents first how they would respond if their child did something that they were supposed not to do. No comparison with the main study is possible as we did not put this question to main-study parents.

The question was an open-ended one and it produced multiple answers. Most parents would try to combine more than one approach, a combination of explanation and some form of intervention, to resolve a problem. Many felt a warning look would suffice (89 percent): " I give him a look. That often stops him." Others would try to explain why the child should not do it (27 percent): "I've done a positive parenting course. I usually say don't do it." or "I explain why." Children were sent away for time-out (26 percent): "If he does it again I take him away and put him in his room and explain why he is in the room". Some children received physical punishment (16 percent):"Sometimes a smack if he intentionally hurt someone." Other parents adopted a "no smacking" policy. Some children lost privileges, often in association with time-out (7 percent). Sometimes the child would be given a last chance to conform (6 percent): " I ask him to stop it. If he doesn't do it I count to 5. If he didn't stop then he would be put in his room." Some children knew when not to overstep the mark (5 percent): "She knows her boundaries and occasionally oversteps them. We don't have a lot of boundaries and always explain and give reasons for the rules." A few parents reacted negatively and yelled or growled at their children (2 percent). Others were anxious not to do so as they felt it would be bad for the child's self-esteem. Some parents tried distracting the child. Others had reward systems, star charts, and the like (4 percent).

We then asked if the respondent's partner would have the same approach. Sixty-one percent of the respondents said that their partner would have the same approach, as they wanted to be consistent and support each other. Only 2 percent thought their partner would behave quite differently from themselves. Seventeen percent thought their partner would be stricter and more inclined to punish physically or yell at the child. By contrast, 8 percent thought that their partner would be more lenient, have more patience and better negotiating skills with the child. One percent each said that the child took more notice of their partner or that the partner worked long hours, walked out, or took no notice of what was going on.

Boys were more likely to be sent to their room than girls (30 percent compared with 21 percent), and to have their privileges withdrawn (9 percent compared with 5 percent).

Two-parent families were more likely to elect the time-out approach, as were families with low-to-middle incomes. Pakeha/European families (28 percent) were more than twice as likely as Maori families to adopt a time-out approach and nearly 3 times more likely than Pacific Island families. Pacific Island families were most likely to use physical punishment (28 percent) compared with Maori families (20 percent) and Pakeha/European (15 percent).

More Pakeha/European respondents felt that their partners would adopt a consistent disciplinary approach than did Maori respondents (62 percent compared with 39 percent). Partners in the highest-income bracket were also more likely to support their main caregiver's decisions (69 percent) than those in the lowest-income bracket (28 percent). Proportionately more respondents in the mid-to-low-income bracket, (23 percent) believed their partners were stricter than they were when compared with the lowest-income bracket (6 percent). Asian parents (15 percent) were more likely to have set limits for breaching the rules than Pakeha/European parents (4 percent) and considered that their partner would be more lenient (26 percent compared with 7 percent).

Relations Between Children and Non-custodial Parents

We found as we had in the main study that the majority of children no longer living with one birth parent remained in touch with that birth parent. Fewer survey children, 13 percent (N=106) compared with 20 percent of main-study children, were living in families which no longer contained one of their original parents. Most (101) were without their father, as were most of the main-study children, and 5 were without their mother. All of the latter still saw their mother, and two-thirds of the children whose father was living separately remained in touch with him. Relations with the parent who was not in the household were good for 44 percent of the children whose fathers were no longer with them, and for 2 of the 5 children whose mothers were no longer in the household. As in the main study only a handful (3) of the 72 children in touch with an original parent no longer got on well with that parent.

Summary

Most of the children in our survey experienced some change in their lives, whether of home or family members. By the time we spoke to their parents most children had gone to school for the first time. Change was inevitably part of their lives. But their experiences were different. For some their families were no longer intact and others had reconstituted. Many had new siblings. Health—or rather ill health—was associated with household income.

We have reported on quite wide ranges of family incomes, and suggested differences in family income could make a difference to the family material and experiential resources available to the survey children. This chapter has shown that such differences do exist particularly in the range of experiences available to them in and outside the home and in activities associated with literacy and numeracy. There is a consistent pattern linking differences in family resources to parental education and family income levels. Differences associated with family type therefore largely reflect differences in opportunity whether it be income or parental education. Family-type differences largely reflect differences in opportunity whether it be income or parental education. They appear particularly in those activities which require money, or parental confidence or knowledge gained through formal education. Some ethnic differences emerge also.

As was found in the main study, the mother's education was also clearly associated with different patterns of parental input into children's activities.

We had difficulties trying to link parental responses to open-ended questions about the children's lives and character with other more precise questions such as those about their child's health and competency. Although over a third of the survey children had been hospitalised, most parents did not recall this occurrence until prompted. Parents were not likely spontaneously to recall their child's full range of skills and were likely to become more positive when asked to

specify their child's mastery of physical and social competency. It may be that parents' spontaneous responses about what a child can do or what they do with their child are related more to personal value systems than to an attempt at specific measurement. It also seems that survey parents were likely to remember more recent or even immediate happenings rather than past events.

CHAPTER 4

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION HISTORY

Parents and caregivers were asked to supply information about 2 of the early childhood care and education settings in which their child had been involved: the first arrangement where the child had spent 2 or 3 hours a week on a regular basis away from the parent/caregiver for at least 3 months, and the ECS their child was attending at the time of the interview, or, for those children who had already started school, the ECS they had attended immediately prior to school. This early childhood service is referred to as the current ECS.

The survey attendance pattern near the age of 5 is comparable with that of the main study only to the extent that the dominant ECSs are group based rather than home based. Otherwise it contrasts sharply, reflecting differences in sampling techniques. Population-based sampling was used in this survey. The main study used a sample stratified to get equal numbers of different ECS types, rather than a sample stratified by proportion of type attended by children in the age group in the region. This resulted in kindergartens, playcentres, and childcare centres each comprising about 30 percent of the sample, with the balance made up of Family Day Care, 8 percent, and Pacific Island language nests 3 percent.

First ECS and Family Characteristics

A third of the children in the survey had attended only one early childhood service prior to starting school. This is the same proportion as in the main study. Pakeha/European children from high-income homes, whose mother had some school qualification, and/or who was in paid employment when the child neared the age of 5, were more likely than others to experience at least 2 consecutive early childhood education services.

As in the main study, childcare and private care (by a friend or relative) are among the main types of first ECSs chosen by parents. However, playgroup, one of the main types of first ECSs chosen by main-study parents does not feature as a dominant choice. Possibly this reflects the differences in sampling technique. Table 10 shows the types of ECSs first attended by children in the survey.

Table 10

Types of ECSs First Attended by Children

Type of ECS	No. of Children	% of Children
Childcare centre/creche	229	46
Private care	85	17
Playcentre	40	8
Private preschool	38	8
Family Day Care[18]	26	5
Kindergarten	19	4
Playgroup	19	4
Nanny	20	4
Nga kohanga reo [18]	8	2
Pacific Island language nests	4	1
Other	4	1
Total	*492	100

* 275 children had attended only one early childhood service.

Creches or childcare centres were used as a first service by almost a third of parents. This contrasts with the much greater use of kindergartens as the dominant current ECS used by almost three-quarters of children in the survey (*see* table 11).

We found no significant associations related to family composition and parents' choice of their child's first ECS. Fifty percent in the highest-income bracket chose childcare for their child's first ECS, as did 40 percent of those on low incomes. Access to childcare by those in the lowest-income bracket could reflect the level of fees subsidisation for low-income families using childcare and Family Day Care. In 1992 this targeted funding was increased by the Government. The larger-than-expected take-up of this subsidy, which allowed low-income parents to afford access to the more expensive forms of ECSs, led to narrower criteria being introduced by the Government in 1993. Parents had to be employed, in training, or under stress to receive more than 9 hours of subsidised early childhood education. At the age of 4 the number of those in the lowest-income bracket attending childcare was only 6 percent. Use of childcare services by parents in the highest-income bracket dropped too, but at a lower rate. Kindergarten use rose correspondingly from 4 percent to 75 percent.

Parents working full time when their child was nearly 5 were twice as likely to choose private care as those not working or working part time. Parents with no school qualifications were most likely to choose nga kohanga reo.

Those parents who were not in paid employment when their child was nearly 5 years old were much more likely to choose playcentre than employed parents, but use remained relatively low, under 10 percent of the total for unemployed parents. No children from the lowest-income bracket attended a private preschool. With one exception the handful of children with nannies as caregivers had parents in the higher-income brackets.

[18] Nga kohanga reo and Family Day Care ECSs were not approached in the survey. Survey children were contacted through schools or other early childhood education services. Thus if attendance came up in survey data, it was because families had used these services earlier.

As we shall see parents gave a number of reasons for their choice of first ECS. These reasons need to take into account the non-availability of kindergarten to most children under 3 years of age.

Current ECS and Family Characteristics

Table 11

Types of ECSs Attended by Children Immediately Prior to Starting School

Type of ECS	No. of Children	% of Children
Kindergarten	573	75
Private preschool	64	8
Childcare centre/creche	59	8
Playcentre	39	5
Nga kohanga reo	13	2
Pacific Island language nest	7	1
Family Day Care	4	1
Private care	3	0
Playgroup	1	0
Other	3	0
Missing data	1	0
Total	767	100

As the kindergarten service is only available for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years, we would expect greater use of this service by older children. However, as the increased use of kindergartens exists alongside a decrease in the use of some of the other services, it seems that parents are choosing to move their children from these services as the children become eligible to attend kindergarten. The playgroups used by 3 percent of parents as first services are traditionally for the use of younger children and there is an expectation that children would move on to other early childhood settings. Other options cater for most ages. The most notable changes are the fall in numbers attending childcare and receiving private care.

Looking at what influenced the choice of the child's last ECS before going to school, we found that parents who were employed full time were over 3 times as likely to use childcare as those parents who were not employed and 4 times more likely to use childcare than those employed part time. They were less likely to use kindergartens than parents who were working part time or not employed. Children from households where the main caregiving parent had Higher School Certificate/Bursary were 2 to 3 times as likely to be attending childcare than children from households where the parents had no school qualifications or lower levels of achievement.

Income and choice of ECSs were also associated. More high-income parents chose childcare (12 percent) than those in the lowest-income bracket (6 percent). We see a similar pattern of attendance at private preschool where more children from families in the highest-income bracket attended (14 percent) than those with middle incomes (6 percent) or low incomes (5 percent). No children of parents in the mid-to-low-income bracket attended a private preschool.

Parents in reconstituted families were more likely to choose childcare (35 percent) compared with parents in 2-parent families (6 percent), and proportionately fewer children from reconstituted families attended kindergarten (47 percent) than did those from 2-parent families (77 percent). Compared with 2-parent families (1 percent) more children from sole-parent families attended nga

kohanga reo (7 percent). Children from households where the main caregiving parent had no school qualification were most likely to go to kindergarten and more likely to attend nga kohanga reo than children from households where the parents had school qualifications.

Choice of ECS, as evidenced by those parents choosing alternatives to kindergarten, is associated with parental education and occupational status but most of all it is predicated on the ability to pay.

Reasons For Choice of ECS—A Comparison of First and Current Service

Table 12

Reasons Parents Chose Their First and Current ECS

Reasons for Choice[19]	First ECS (N=492) % of children	Current ECS (N=767) % of children
Suited parents' needs	40	17
Previous family/friends' attendance	40	34
Location	34	62
Reputation	26	32
ECS facilities	18	18
Curriculum/programme	14	16
ECS/class size	11	4
Disciplinary/climate	11	8
Peer group/friends	10	10
Cost	8	3
ECS type	4	9
ECS mix	1	2
By default	13	11

The reasons shown for choice of the child's first ECS in table 12 replicate in many respects those of the main study. Location of the first ECS, the dominant reason given by main-study parents for their choice of the first ECS, is also one of the main reasons reported by survey parents. Main-study parents also identified the centre's good reputation, and other positive experiences such as those gained through a sibling's attendance as exercising a major influence over their choice. Choosing an ECS to suit the parents' needs, a major reason given by main-study parents, was also an important consideration. Cost, however, was not a limiting factor for most survey parents although it was an important factor for main-study parents. Only 8 percent of survey parents felt cost was a factor in choosing the first ECS. Reasons for choice for the first ECS were fairly constant across all income groups, family formations, and ethnic groups.

Main-study and survey parents gave like reasons for choosing their child's last ECS although the weightings are not the same. The proximity of the ECS to home or work was one of the main reasons main-study parents gave for their choice of ECS and it was the overriding reason for survey parents. Sixty-two percent of all survey parents and 35 percent of main-study parents gave this as a factor in their choice. A third of the survey parents also considered educational standards when making their choice of an ECS as did 40 percent of the main-study parents. Personal

[19] Respondents could choose more than one category.

recommendation or familiarity through previous use were also important factors in choosing a current ECS for both survey and main-study parents. Cost was a factor for 7 percent of main-study parents. Only 3 percent of survey parents reported cost as influencing their choice of current ECSs.

Family income had no significant impact on the reasons parents gave for choosing their current ECS. The number saying cost was a factor was almost half the number who said it influenced the choice of first ECS. Given the dominance of "free" kindergarten as children near the age of 5, we can expect a result of this kind.

There were some small differences when we looked at the reasons parents gave for their choice in relation to family formation. A greater proportion of parents in 2-parent extended families (18 percent) and sole parents (17 percent) mentioned ECS type as a factor in making their choice when compared with parents in 2-parent families (8 percent). Type includes an ECS chosen for cultural reasons (te kohanga reo and Pacific Island language nests) and those chosen by virtue of the parents' religion. Compared with parents in 2-parent families, more sole parents (32 percent compared with 17 percent) felt meeting parental needs was a consideration, but peer group and friends exercised less influence on choice (2 percent sole parent and 13 percent 2-parent). The socioeconomic mix of the ECS was less of a concern to parents in 2-parent families (2 percent) than it was to sole parents in extended families (14 percent).

Thirteen percent of parents said that they had chosen the first ECS by default and 11 percent gave the same reason for the decision on their child's current ECS.

Time Spent at ECSs

Around half the children remained in their first early childhood settings for periods of up to 1 year. By comparison two-thirds of children attended their current or last ECS for between 1 and 2 years (table 13). On average children stayed longer at playcentre and nga kohanga reo. The mean attendance for playcentre was 35 months, nga kohanga reo 32 months, childcare 27 months, private preschool 21 months, and kindergarten 18 months.

Table 13

Length of Stay at First and Current ECSs

Length of Time Spent (Months)	First ECS (N=492*) % of children	Current ECS (N=767) % of children
0–6	20	4
7–12	29	15
13–18	14	31
19–24	14	36
25–30	8	5
31–36	6	3
37–42	2	1
43–48	2	2
49–54	2	1
55–60	2	1
Total	99	99

* 275 children had attended only one early childhood service and were not included in this group.

There is a greater spread of hours per week spent by children in their first ECS compared with the hours per week spent in the current ECS (table 14). Over two-thirds of those children who spent time at a first ECS were there for fewer than 15 hours per week, the mode being 6 hours and the median 8.7 hours. Perhaps this suggests that in many situations this time is used to give the parent/caregiver a break and/or to encourage the child to mix with other adults and children away from the primary caregiver, rather than enabling the primary caregiver to take up paid employment or study. The mode and the median number of hours children spend at the current ECS is 15 hours. This is the number of hours a child would spend if enrolled at the morning session of kindergarten. Given that such a large proportion of children in the survey attended kindergarten, this is not a surprising result. More than 80 percent of the respondents, mainly women, either did not work or worked under 20 hours per week (38 percent), indicating that the parent's working time was being adjusted to family commitments. This is consistent with Statistics New Zealand's findings that there is a clear linkage between the age of the youngest child and women's participation in work, with part-time work being most common among women with preschool children.[20]

Table 14

Time Spent Each Week by Children at First and Current ECS

Time in Hours	First ECS (N=492) % of children	Current ECS (N=767) % of children
0–5	25	1
6–10	35	8
11–15	11	77
16–20	4	3
21–25	3	2
26–30	6	4
31–35	2	1
36–40	7	2
41–45	4	1
46–50	3	1
Over 50	0	0
Total	100	100

Almost all children are regular attendees when enrolled in any of the early childhood services, at whatever stage. Only 1 percent of those enrolled in a first ECS and 2 percent of those enrolled in a current ECS were reported by their parents to have irregular attendance. Child health problems and conflict with the parents' work or study were the main reasons for the child failing to attend regularly.

Children's Experiences in ECSs—Benefits and Disadvantages

We asked parents about their level of satisfaction with the child's current ECS (last one attended before going to school) and, if there had been more than one, the first ECS.

[20] *New Zealand Now: Families*, (1991), pp. 44–45. Wellington: Statistics New Zealand.

The majority of survey parents, as with the main-study parents, felt that the experience of attending an ECS was a positive one for their child. The benefit most singled out by survey parents (over 80 percent) was that their child had learnt to make friends with other children, and to relate to other adults. Forming social relationships was also the dominant benefit for their child reported by main-study parents. Research has shown that teachers too consider it important for parents to have given their child the opportunity to mix with other children and adults prior to going to school (Renwick, 1979). Parents also saw benefits for children's cognitive development, as did main-study parents especially from the current ECS. Fostering their child's independence was rated more highly by survey parents. As in the main study only a small proportion of parents mentioned any negative consequences of attendance at any of the early childhood services. The pattern illustrated in table 15 below is the same but the proportions are different. Possibly this reflects differences in parents' educational attainment and income levels.

Table 15

Parental Perceptions of Benefits and Disadvantages to Children's Experiences in ECSs—Survey and Main Study Compared

	First ECS		Current ECS	
Benefit/Disadvantage	Survey (N=492) %	Main Study (N=157) %	Survey (N=767) %	Main Study (N=307) %
Positive Factors				
Social-emotional	86	52	85	82
General (unspecified)	49	15	57	23
Independence	38	12	40	19
Cognitive/language	33	22	50	34
Motor/skills	12	5	23	8
Cultural	8	4	11	6
Negative Factors				
Parental concern	4	2	8	3
Health and tiredness	4	-	-	-
Difficulty adjusting to ECS	3	2	2	3
General	4	2	2	3
Social-emotional	2	1	4	2
Independence	1	2	1	3
Cognitive/language	1	1	3	2

Note: Respondents could choose more than one category.

First ECS

Parental perceptions of positive experiences at the first ECS did, to some extent, reflect family composition and resources. More parents in 2-parent families (88 percent of those who used a first ECS) felt that their children had positive social-emotional experiences than did sole parents (71 percent), and fewer parents in 2-parent families (2 percent) mentioned children's health as a negative factor compared with sole parents (8 percent).

Parents in the highest-income bracket were more positive about the social benefits of early childhood education than those in the mid-low and low-income brackets. Mothers without school qualifications were less likely to see positive gains for their children in terms of general benefits,

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social skills, or motor skills. Pacific Island parents were less likely than others to comment on the independence gained by their child.

Positive cultural experiences for their child were most likely to be mentioned by Pacific Island parents.

Boys and girls shared equally in the benefits of attending an ECS, but nearly twice as many girls as boys were said to have difficulty in adjusting to their first ECS.

Current ECS

Forming social relationships remained the most positive aspect for children at their current ECS. Over half the parents thought the child's experience was generally beneficial. Independence and the development of cognitive and language skills were also important. There was little change in the direction of parental perceptions about the first and last ECS attended by their child. There are indicative differences between high-income parents (87 percent) and middle-income parents (88 percent) seeing their child gaining positive social and character-forming experiences, and those parents in the lowest-income bracket (75 percent).

Maori parents (20 percent) and Pacific Island parents (32 percent) were more likely to mention positive cultural experiences compared with Pakeha/European parents (9 percent). Positive cultural experiences were also mentioned less often by parents in 2-parent families (10 percent) and sole parents (11 percent) compared with sole parents in extended families (29 percent).

Children's cognitive development was acknowledged more by sole parents in extended families (75 percent) than by parents in 2-parent families (49 percent). Pacific Island parents (26 percent) continued to make less mention of independence than Pakeha/European parents (45 percent) and Maori parents (44 percent).

We found a positive association when looking at parents' perceptions of the child's first ECS. Sixty-one percent of parents now working full time thought that their child had benefited socially through attendance at their first ECS compared with 47 percent of parents who were not currently working.[21] Employed parents' focus on children's emotional development/security is consistent with recent research findings on the interface between work, families, and early childhood education (Callister & Podmore, with Galtry & Sawicka, 1995, chapter 6).

Parents who mentioned negative effects for their child were chiefly from the upper-income brackets.

There were fewer significant associations between parental perceptions of their child's current ECS and parental employment status than there were with income, education, and family type. We found one indicative association: more parents who were not in employment (26 percent) thought that their child had gained positive motor skills than those working full time (17 percent).

However, educational qualifications made a difference, as they did in the main study. Parents leaving school with some qualifications were more likely to take a positive view of their child's first ECS experience than those with no school qualifications. Sixty-four percent of those who left school with Higher School Certificate/Bursary felt that their child had benefited socially compared with 28 percent of those who had no school qualification. Those parents who left school with Higher School Certificate/Bursary also felt that their child had developed their motor skills (11 percent), gained greater autonomy (28 percent), and that their first ECS experience was generally positive (38 percent), compared with the views of parents with no school qualifications (1, 16, and

[21] Parents' employment status at the time their child attended their first ECS is not known.

12 percent respectively).

Some of these differences between parents with no school qualifications and those with some school qualifications tended to disappear when parents were asked what they thought about the child's current ECS. However there continued to be some differences. Twenty-six percent of parents with Higher School Certificate/Bursary thought their child's physical development had been enhanced compared with 12 percent of parents with no school qualification. Parents with no qualifications since leaving school, proportionately more of whom were of Maori or Pacific Island origin, were more likely to perceive positive cultural aspects than those with postgraduate qualifications (15 percent of those with no qualifications compared with 5 percent with postgraduate qualifications). However, parents with postgraduate qualifications were more likely to perceive an ECS having a negative social-emotional impact on the child than were parents who had gained no qualifications since leaving school (13 percent compared with 3 percent).

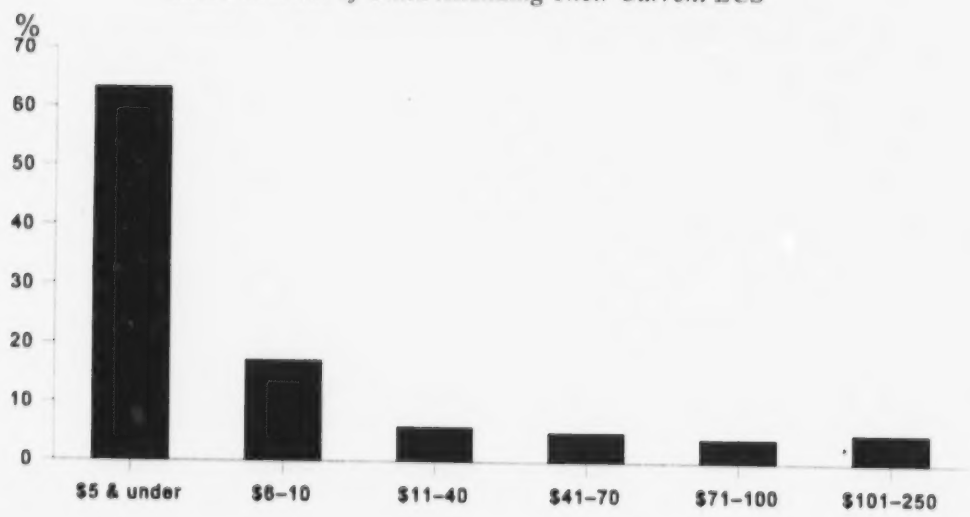
There is an income-related pattern associated with parental concern over current ECS quality—the higher the income, the greater the likelihood of dissatisfaction. Parental ability to pay is not necessarily a guarantee of satisfaction with ECS quality. Parental education is, however, likely to create a greater awareness of both the positive and negative impacts of their child's ECS.

Cost of Current ECSs

Almost all parents (97 percent) paid something for their child's attendance at an ECS either in the form of fees or koha (donation). Sixty percent of parents said that they paid under $5 per week and the majority (80 percent) paid under $10 a week. This corresponds with the dominance of kindergarten, and playcentre use. As seen in figure 6 below, the remainder paid varying amounts. Thirty-one parents paid more than $100 a week and 6 paid more than $150 per week.

Figure 6

Cost Per Week of Child Attending Their Current ECS



Kindergarten and playcentre were the cheapest ECS options for parents. Ninety percent of the parents with children at kindergarten and all the playcentre parents reported that the weekly attendance costs for their child were $5 or less. The balance of the kindergarten parents paid

between $6 and $10 per week. Private preschools were the most expensive sessional option for parents with half the parents paying above $40 per week. The highest weekly costs were borne by parents with private-care arrangements and those using childcare services, with half of those parents paying above $100 per week.

In the main study we found that in general ECS costs reflected family income; we found a similar pattern among the survey families. Parents in the highest-income bracket were least likely to pay $5 a week and the most likely to be paying fees above $150 per week. Reconstituted families (41 percent) and sole-parent extended families (19 percent) paid more in fees than 2-parent families (11 percent). European parents were most likely to pay fees above $40. This is likely to reflect the use of private preschools by just under a third of the parents in this group. Maori and Pacific Island parents were more likely than others to be paying $5 or less a week. There were some associations with school qualifications. Parents with no school qualifications, proportionately more of whom were on lower incomes, were most likely to be paying $5 or less per week and least likely to be using ECSs costing $71 or above per week. Parents with Higher School Certificate/Bursary were most likely to be using ECSs costing $71 or more. These parents as we reported earlier were more likely to choose childcare, and had a higher rate of full-time employment.

The ECS Exercising the Most Influence

We asked the parents of children who had attended more than one ECS prior to going to school to tell us which ECS had had the greatest influence on their child. Not surprisingly parents often chose the ECS their child had most recently attended. Because the pattern of use changed significantly from the time the child first attended an ECS, we took a further look at how the preferences related to the child's first and current ECS. Fifty percent of those whose child had ever been to kindergarten chose that as the most influential of their child's ECS; 42 percent of the private preschool parents chose private preschool; 25 percent of the childcare users chose childcare; 22 percent of private-care users chose private care; 19 percent of the Family Day Care users chose Family Day Care; 15 percent of playcentre parents chose playcentre; and no playgroup users chose playgroup.

Fifty-one respondents said they did not know which service to choose.

Preferences for service generally remained the same across all family, income, and ethnic groupings.

We do not have quality data on all the ECSs attended by the children, only for ECSs in the main study. Thus the ability to make links between quality, as judged in the light of the research literature, and parents' perceptions cannot be explored. Not surprisingly, given its dominance as the main type of ECS currently attended, a greater proportion of parents identified kindergarten as the most influential ECS their child attended; in the main study kindergarten was also nominated by a high proportion of users.

Summary

Most children experience more than one ECS. This is more likely if they are Pakeha/European, from a high-income family, and with a mother who has at least some school qualifications.

Until children reach the age where they can attend kindergarten, the pattern of use of ECSs varies considerably. Most of the parents surveyed seemed to select their child's first ECS to suit their personal needs. Generally families who did not use kindergarten immediately prior to school

came from the higher-income brackets. The availability of kindergarten and proximity to the child's home had a significant impact on parental choice of service immediately prior to school and had an across- the-board appeal to families of all socioeconomic classes. Playcentre users were exclusively those from 2-parent households. Parents who were employed were the dominant users of childcare. Use of private preschools and childcare was also largely predicated on the parents' ability to pay. Parents' educational attainment clearly influenced their perceptions of ECS quality. However, the amount paid for early childhood education was no guarantor of parental satisfaction.

CHAPTER 5

CHILDREN'S COMPETENCIES

The competency measures used in this survey are drawn from some of the dimensions of children's learning and development which we described in detail in the main study.[22] We use the word competency to refer to combinations of knowledge, skill, and, sometimes, attitude, which can be seen at work in everyday behaviour, or gauged through specific activities.

We gathered material from parents on 6 of the 10 realms of competency explored in greater depth in the main study.

Communication	Curiosity
Social Skills with Peers	Perseverance
Social Skills with Adults	Motor Skills

To fit within the timeframe allowed for the Parent[23] interview we chose a condensed set of measures concentrating on children's social and communicative skills. We have termed these competencies, which require observations by adults of the children over a period of time, the "being" competencies. Parents were also asked to gauge their child's physical co-ordination and level of involvement in pretend play; these are called the "doing" competencies. Finally, we asked parents to assess their contribution to the development of their child's skills. Because we were unable to ask parents all the questions that we asked when we interviewed early childhood teachers during the main study, we can make few direct comparisons between our findings here and those of the main study. We can, however, compare the responses with some like items.

The "Being" Competencies

We asked the child's parent to say whether a description we gave matched the child to varying degrees. A 5-point scale was used (always; often; sometimes; hardly ever; never). These ratings have been numerically converted for analysis (always = 5; often = 4; sometimes = 3; hardly ever = 2; never = 1).

The following questions were asked:

Communication	Is s/he able to remember a simple instruction after hearing it only once?
	Can s/he be relied upon to pass simple messages from one person to another?
Curiosity	Is s/he a curious child? That is, does s/he ask a lot of questions and/or like to take things apart?

[22] Wylie, Thompson, & Kerslake Hendricks (1996), pp. 11–14.

[23] For Parent read Guardian/ Main Caregiver unless otherwise stated.

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Perseverance	Can s/he get another child to let her/him have a turn at something by asking?
Social Skills with Peers	When s/he is playing with other children, does s/he take turns and share, understanding the rules of fair play?
Social Skills with Adults	Does s/he ask for help and information when s/he needs it?

These questions were selected from each cluster used in the main study because the item score was closest to the average score for the cluster in pilot-study results.

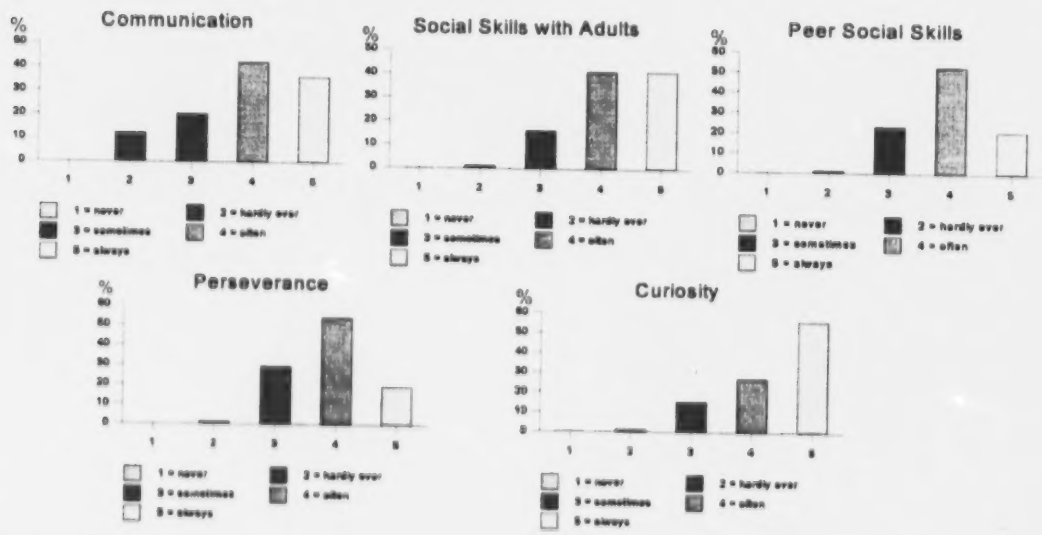
Most parents rated their child's ability above the midpoint (3) on the 5-point scale.

The set of figures below gives the range of ratings on the 5-point scale for each item within the "being" competencies. In any scale there is a tendency for clustering at the middle figure. Therefore the most telling items are those which have a higher proportion of children than average for the ratings scoring a maximum, and, conversely, those items where more than the average proportion score less than the midpoint of 3. Not surprisingly, children's social skills with peers were thought to be less well developed than those with adults. There is a much more even distribution at the higher end of the scale when we look at relationships between children and adults.

In the main study we found that teachers gave perseverance and curiosity the lowest scores for the "being" competencies. Our parents' ratings follow a similar trend for perseverance but have reversed this trend when rating curiosity. The pattern of survey parents' responses is similar to that seen in their rating of children's communication skills with adults. Possibly this result reflects the greater intimacy of family relationships, giving more opportunities for one-to-one interaction between adults and children. However, it may be that teachers are basing their judgments on the observation of a wider range of behaviours.

Figure 7

"Being" Competencies



Tables 16–18 compare the parental responses given in the survey and those of the teachers in the main study.

Table 16

Curiosity and Perseverance—Survey and Main Study Compared

Competency	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	Mean Rating
Curiosity						
Asks a lot of questions and/or likes to take things apart						
(1) Survey (N=765)	0	1	15	27	56	4.38
(2) Main (N=306)	1	10	28	41	21	3.71
Perseverance						
Get another child to let have a turn by asking						
(1) Survey (N=765)	0	1	29	50	19	3.87
(2) Main (N=306)	0	7	39	39	14	3.59

Table 17

Social-Emotional Competencies—Survey and Main Study Compared

Competency	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	Mean Rating
Social Skills with Peers						
Takes turns, shares, understands rules and fair play						
(1) Survey (N=766)	0	1	23	55	21	3.95
(2) Main (N=306)	0	3	27	44	26	3.93
Social Skills with Adults						
Asks for help and/or information when needed						
(1) Survey (N=765)	0	1	16	41	41	4.23
(2) Main (N=306)	0	6	18	41	36	4.07

Table 18

Communicative Competence—Survey and Main Study Compared

Competency	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	Mean Rating
Receptive Communication						
Able to remember and carry out a simple instruction heard once						
(1) Survey (N=766)	0	1	10	43	35	4.10
(2) Main (N=306)	0	1	14	44	41	4.25
Express Communication						
Can pass on simple messages						
(1) Survey (N=764)	0	2	19	42	37	4.12
(2) Main (N=306)	1	3	15	43	36	4.04

Some statistically indicative gender differences emerged for some items in these competencies. A higher proportion of girls achieved maximum scores for communication than boys: 39 percent could *always* remember and carry out an instruction, compared with 31 percent of boys. Girls could be relied upon more than boys to *always* pass on a simple message (42 percent compared with 31 percent).

Family composition also led to some indicative differences in the way the competencies were rated. More sole-parent families than 2-parent families answered "sometimes" on the perseverance item: 44 percent compared with 27 percent. Reconstituted families had the most curious children: 82 percent said their children were always curious compared with 2-parent families 55 percent, and 43 percent of sole parents in an extended family situation. Children from sole-parent families (32 percent) were more likely to score "always" for the observance of the rules of fair play than those from 2-parent families (20 percent).

When it comes to looking at children's negotiating skills with peers, more children from 2-parent families scored "often" (53 percent), when compared with children from sole-parent families (25 percent). Parental ratings on this item were not significantly affected by whether or not their child had siblings.

When we looked at whether family income influenced responses, we found that families in the lowest-income bracket, earning under $20,000 per annum, rated their children less highly on the perseverance measure than those in the highest-income bracket (35 percent rated "often" compared with 56 percent of the families earning above $60,000 a year). There is an indicative difference also between the highest- and lowest-income brackets when rating children's curiosity. Twice as many of the highest-income parents gave their children a rating of "often" (32 percent, compared with 16 percent of the lowest-income earners). However, over three-quarters of all parents, irrespective of income, gave above the middle score for this item.

There are also indicative differences in parents' ratings of children's communicative skills between the highest- and lowest-income brackets. Thirty-eight percent of children in families with the highest income were rated as "always" able to remember and carry out an instruction compared with 26 percent of children in the lowest-income families. Similarly 45 percent of the children in the highest-income families could "often" be relied upon to pass simple messages compared with 24 percent of children in families with the lowest incomes. However, 40 percent of parents in both income groups rated their children as "always" reliable.

There are linkages that can be established between household composition and resources and parents' perceptions of children's social development. There is a trend for parents in 2-parent households and correspondingly those in the higher-income brackets to rate their children more highly on social scales.

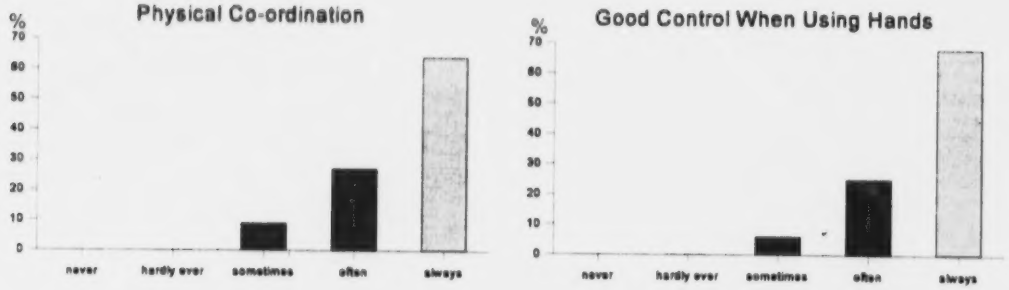
The "Doing" Competencies: Motor Skills

These were assessed by asking parents to rate their child's physical co-ordination and manual dexterity. We asked:

Gross-motor Skills	Does s/he show good physical co-ordination (able to keep her/his balance, run without tripping over)?
Fine-motor Skills	Does s/he generally show good control when using her/his hands (e.g., to use scissors, Sellotape, fit things together)?

Figure 8

Motor Skills



The majority of children were thought to have good control when using scissors, making things, or putting things together. A similar pattern emerges from parents' assessment of gross-motor skills with more than 50 percent of the children credited with "always" showing good physical co-ordination. Only one child was thought to hardly ever show good physical co-ordination and only 4—all boys—were considered to have little or no fine-motor control. Girls' scores at the upper end were indicatively ahead of those for boys for fine-motor activities, 74 percent compared with 63 percent.

Parents generally were more confident about their child's physical abilities, in terms of their use of ratings and their knowledge of the child's skills and abilities, than they were about the child's social and communicative skills. Our analysis in the main study showed little correlation between these physical skills and the other competencies.

Parents' Education and Perceptions of Children's Competencies

We explored whether there were differences associated with the primary caregiver's educational attainment at the time they left school and their competency ratings for their child. In the main study we found a strong association between parents' (mother's) education and differences in most, but not all, of the children's competencies.

Analysis of the "being" competencies shows no association between survey parents' education when leaving school and their ratings of children's social skills with adults.

Parents with no school qualification were likely to use lower ratings than those leaving school with Higher School Certificate/Bursary when rating children's communicative skills. Parents with no school qualification rated their children's reliability when passing messages as "sometimes" (32 percent) and 37 percent rated as "sometimes" the children's ability to remember and carry out a simple instruction. Those leaving with Higher School Certificate/Bursary were more likely to use the "often" rating as the starting point: 48 percent said their children could "often" be relied upon to pass messages accurately, and 39 percent said they could "always" do so; only 11 percent used the "sometimes" rating. Only 12 percent used "sometimes" to describe their child's ability to remember and carry out a simple instruction. Parents with Higher School Certificate/Bursary were also less inclined to use the "sometimes" rating when rating children's social skills with their peers and children's curiosity.

Sixty-two percent of parents with Higher School Certificate/Bursary rated their child's negotiating skills with their peers as "often" compared with 39 percent of parents with no school qualification and 47 percent of those leaving school at the end of the sixth form year. This shifts

into small indicative differences at the "always" level. Fewer parents with Higher School Certificate/Bursary (14 percent) rated their child as "always" able to negotiate turn-taking with their peers compared with parents with Sixth Form Certificate (21 percent) and those with no school qualification (24 percent).

More parents with Higher School Certificate/Bursary (62 percent) scored their child's understanding of the rules of fair play as "often" than did those with no school qualification (43 percent).

Thirty percent of parents with Higher School Certificate/Bursary thought that their child was "often" curious, compared with 18 percent of parents with no school qualification.

As in the main study the level of education attained by parents had little association with their child's motor skills. There was no association between the main caregiver's or their partner's education and the ratings given for fine-motor skills. When comparing children's gross-motor skills there is an indicative difference between the ratings given by respondents with no school qualification and those who left school with Higher School Certificate/Bursary or equivalent. Parents leaving school with no qualifications (15 percent) were more likely to use "sometimes" rather than "often" or "always" as the starting point for rating their child's performance compared with parents leaving school with Higher School Certificate/Bursary (4 percent).

The Child at Play

Pretend play shows a greater awareness of different social situations than does simple play where children work alongside each other and interact, not necessarily using language. Pretend play calls for a well-developed sense of social situations and greater social skills when working alongside other children. In co-operative pretend play children work with clear roles and a sequence. In pretend-complex play children invent scripts, assign roles, and direct each other to the next act. Each of the children in the main study were observed 5 times for 1 minute on 3 occasions, a total of 4861 observations. Seven percent were engaged in co-operative pretend play. Three percent of those observations showed children engaged in pretend-complex play. We could not replicate this set of observations in the survey, so we thought we might arrive at a rough approximation by asking parents to rate their child's involvement in pretend-complex play. We asked:

> Does s/he get involved in complex fantasy or pretend play with children or adults, where s/he suggests: "You pretend that . . ." or "You be the . . ."

Almost 75 percent of parents said their children frequently or regularly engaged in fantasy play. Children (47 percent) from the highest-income bracket were more likely to be rated as "often" engaged in pretend-complex play than children (34 percent) from the lowest-income bracket. There were no significant differences associated with family composition, nor were there any associations between parents' education and their judgment of their child's involvement in pretend play. At the "always" level there was an indicative gender difference with more girls (33 percent) than boys (26 percent) engaging in complex pretend play. When we observed children at play in the main study we found little evidence of frequent occurrence of complex levels of play. What play was taking place was not likely to include adult participation. Although it appears to be contrary to what we observed in the ECS environment, the intensity of adult/child interactions in the home environment may well be reflected in the parents' responses. This does not presuppose active adult participation in their child's play but rather that the parents' responses may be conditioned by closer proximity

to the child over a long period of time. They may have a greater knowledge of their child, or children's pretend play may differ in the home setting.

Parents' Contribution

We asked parents in what ways they might have contributed to the range of knowledge and skills that we had talked about and that their child had learnt over the past 4 to 5 years. This was an open-ended question and it drew a variety of responses.

We grouped the responses into 6 main categories:

1. Provide experiences/opportunities, activities that require time (not necessarily money), give time to the child, listen to the child (74 percent).

   I have crafty things available for her. We read a lot and I take her to parks. I always take part in her make believe fantasies. She's encouraged to learn a lot and not be shy.

   He's part Maori - I've involved him in Maori culture after school.

2. Provide resources (usually costing money), e.g., gym, swimming, ballet, toys, creative/fantasy material (41 percent).

   We provide lots of experiences, gym classes, holiday programmes, just lots of input and lots of incentives to achieve goals.

   She goes to the gym to help her with her co-ordination.

3. Read to the child, visit library, encourage literacy (35 percent).

   We read lots and talk a lot to her.

4. Always encourage the child, let the child be self, explore, develop self (28 percent).

   The family give her time and patience. We answer her questions to the best of our ability. We don't beat around the bush, call a spade a spade. We give her scope to play with friends and let her do her own thing.

   We listen to him, and encourage him to listen to his parents.

5. Teach social skills, manners, how to behave, sharing (25 percent).

   Introduce as many experiences as possible. She is encouraged to share with her sister and friends. Good behaviour is role modelled.

We try to instil some discipline.

Christian lifestyle.

6. Older siblings'/grandparents' help. Provide stable family environment (27 percent).

We have an extended family, provide books and materials, toys and games and have taken part when asked in fantasy play. We provide the settings for kicking things off, that is, we suggest ideas that trigger the imagination. Mum is home to look after the kids.

Most parents felt that they had made a positive contribution to their child's development. Only 10 parents had misgivings. Some felt they did not have enough time due to pressures from other family members, and others mentioned work commitments ("I am surprised he is doing so well as I'm stressed out"). Some lacked confidence about their efforts but said they tried and others were having difficulty managing the child. Fifteen parents said that they did not know whether they had contributed anything at all ("Nothing much—don't push her").

A small cluster (20) felt banning or restricting television viewing was a positive contribution to their child's learning ("We try to restrict TV watching"). Ten parents mentioned the skills that they and their child had picked up at the child's ECS.

There is very little variation in the responses that could be attributed to differences between families. Parents in 2-parent families were slightly more likely than those from sole-parent families to mention the development of social skills. Pakeha families make more mention (41 percent) of contributing resources than Pacific Island families (26 percent).

Income appears to have had no influence on the distribution of responses for the most popular category (the provision of learning experiences, opportunities, and activities) mentioned by parents. The majority of families on all income levels attached priority to being with and listening to their children. Resourcing shows a predictable downward trend as income levels fall but the variation is not great. There is a fairly even distribution among those mentioning reading. Nor did educational attainment have much impact on the parents' own assessment of their contribution to their child's development. An indicative difference is shown between parents with the highest school-leaving qualification (46 percent) and those with no school qualification (33 percent) regarding the provision of resources for children requiring a monetary contribution.

Over all, our families, regardless of family make-up or income, shared common assumptions about what contributed most to their child's development. Chief among these is the provision of a loving, caring, and enriching environment.

Summary

The majority of the children nearing 5 in this survey were thought by their parents to:

- communicate well with adults,
- take an active interest in the world around them, and
- be creative in their play.

Parents considered that their children were well co-ordinated physically. They rated children's physical prowess more highly than the "being" competencies. We could say these competencies are the "seen" ones. They were less inclined to say that the children could always solve problems with their peers or persevere to get what they wanted in a socially acceptable manner. However, the majority considered that the children could, for the most part, get on well with their peers.

Differences between parents in the survey and comparable teacher observations in the main study were few. The most pronounced was the parents' use of higher ratings for children's curiosity. Survey children at home also appeared to engage more frequently in pretend-complex play than did main-study children observed in the ECS environment. Parents with the highest level of education at the time they left school were inclined to use higher ratings over all in their estimation of children's competency than parents with no school qualifications.

Finally, with a few exceptions, parents were positive that they had played a constructive role in shaping their child's development.

CHAPTER 6

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ECSs IN THE SURVEY

Information on the early childhood education centres, their planning of children's learning, assessment of their programmes, and their behaviour rules for children were incorporated into the main-study report. The information came in the form of a written profile given by staff following set questions.

In this survey 24 kindergartens (58 percent of the total in the sample area), 10 childcare centres (20 percent of the total), and 9 playcentres (50 percent of the total) responded to our request to provide a written profile of their ECS. All the ECSs profiled were chartered. This chapter outlines their main structural characteristics.

We found in the main study that the structural characteristics most consistently associated with quality were group size, ECS type, the proportion of qualified staff, that is, with an ECE diploma, and the highest staff salary paid at the ECS. Quality increased with an increasing proportion of qualified staff, and higher salaries paid to staff. Smaller group size did not have quite the expected beneficial impact on quality ratings. The negative impact of larger group size was offset in the case of kindergartens by the higher proportion of qualified staff. The variables of children-to-staff ratio, roll stability, and staff stability were also associated with quality.

Group Size and Staff-to-Child Ratios

Consistent with the patterns in the main study, the survey kindergartens had the highest average number of children present at any one session, 35 at morning sessions and 29 in the afternoons. The average for playcentre was 19 at morning and 16 at afternoon sessions, and for childcare, 22 at morning sessions and 20 during afternoons. Kindergartens had between 53 and 90 children enrolled, the average being 77. Playcentre enrolments ranged from 25 to 65 (average 44) and childcare ranged from 20 to 61, with 37 being the average. The average enrolment at kindergarten was higher than that for the other services.

None of the kindergartens took children under 2 years of age, one took children aged 2, and 2 kindergartens restricted enrolments to children aged 4 years. The majority took children between 3 and 5 years. Kindergartens uniformly grouped children by age with 12 months or less between the oldest and youngest at a session.

Responses from playcentres indicated enrolments from birth to 5 years, with mixed-age ranges at their sessions. More than half the childcare centres took children under 2. One restricted enrolments to children from the age of 3. All except one grouped children of all ages together.

Kindergartens averaged 3 staff present per session, an average staff-to-child ratio of 1:12. Playcentre also had an average of 3 responsible staff present, giving an average staff ratio of 1:6. Playcentres also had other adults present over and above the responsible staff members required for licensing purposes. Looking at the number of adults present, playcentres had between 5 and 8 persons, with an average of 6, and an adult-to-child ratio of just over 1:2. Childcare centres had an average of 5 responsible staff and a ratio of around 1:5.

Given that staffing ratios in childcare vary according to the age of the children,[24] care needs to be taken in comparing childcare child/staff ratios with those of the other ECSs. The same observation might be made of playcentres, given the attendance of children of varying ages. However, playcentres had additional adults present, indicating the increased likelihood of high-quality staff/child relationships although, as we found in the main study, it is the quality of the ECS staff themselves, not simply the presence of adults, which makes the difference.

Stability of Staff and Children Attending the ECS

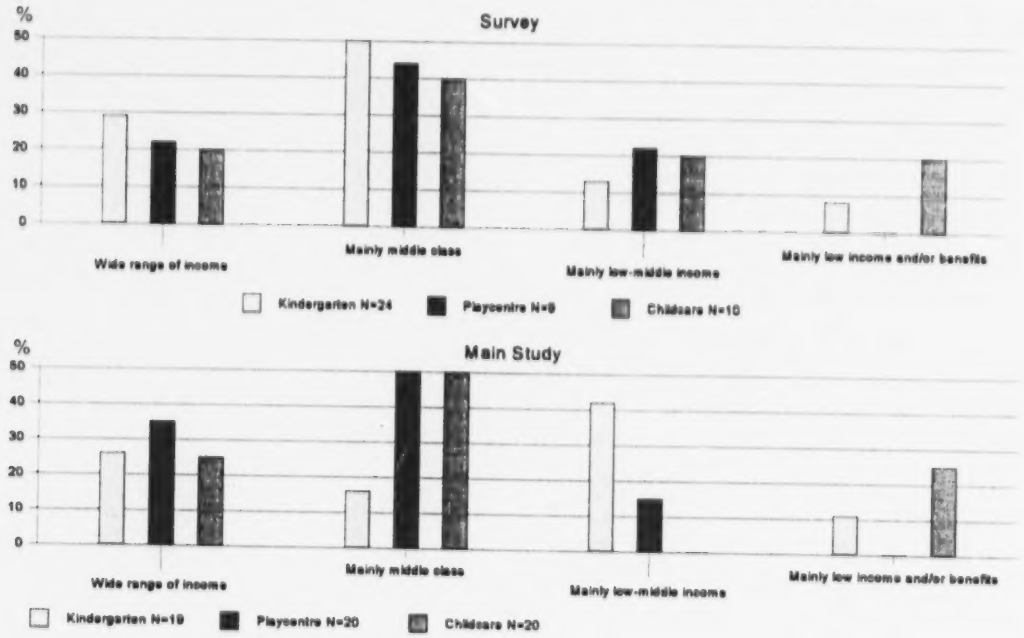
Kindergartens were the only ECS to say that they had experienced a high turnover of children (21 percent). Thirty-three percent of kindergartens said that their rolls were very stable and 46 percent said that they had a low turnover. Most playcentres said that they had a low turnover rate. Seventy-eight percent had a low turnover, and 22 percent said that they had very stable rolls. More than half the childcare centres said that they had very stable rolls (60 percent) and the remaining 40 percent described their turnover as low.

Sixty percent of all ECS staff worked full time and 40 percent part time. Four kindergartens indicated that they had experienced some staff turnover during the 6 months we were in contact with them. One playcentre also indicated some changes in staff. Over all there is a picture of relative stability.

Socioeconomic Profile of ECS

Figure 9

ECS Socioeconomic Profile—Survey and Main Study Compared



[24] The minimum staffing ratios for children of mixed ages (open for an all-day session) are 1:4 for infants and 1:6 for children over 2.

The profile reflects patterns of attendance reported earlier (chapter 4). We see evidence from the main-study results and those of the survey of the probable effects of cost subsidisation for low-income families using childcare prior to 1993. We can also find confirmation that playcentre attendance was not an option exercised by either main-study or survey parents in the lowest-income bracket. This may be a consequence of parents not being able, or not wishing, to meet the playcentre requirement for active parental involvement. Survey kindergartens appear to cater for more children whose families are in the mid-to-upper income group and correspondingly have fewer enrolments from children in the mid-to-low income groups than did the kindergartens in the main study. This probably reflects differences in the socioeconomic profile of the 2 samples.

The ethnic profile of the ECS responding shows some variation by type. Playcentres catered for 100 percent Pakeha/European children, childcare 60 percent, and kindergartens 38 percent. Nearly 60 percent of kindergartens and 40 percent of childcare centres said their ethnic composition was mixed. A small percentage of kindergartens had a predominantly Pacific Island base.

Although the socioeconomic profile of school populations has been found to be associated with differences in educational provision and opportunity (e.g., Lauder & Hughes, 1990; Thrupp, 1994; Wylie, 1994), we did not find in our analysis of the main-study results any significant associations linking the ECS socioeconomic profile with quality of provision. We concluded, at the time, that the lack of significant associations, and the fact that the indicative association found did not consistently favour ECSs with a particular socioeconomic profile, suggested that children from different income groups were accessing ECSs of much the same quality. However, our age-6 analysis of associations of children's competencies with their early childhood experience shows that there is a relationship between ECS socioeconomic mix and the child's competency levels.[25] Children whose last ECS served mainly low-income children showed lower performance in a number of the competencies.[26]

Highest Staff Salary

Highest staff salary has been identified in overseas research literature and by Smith (1995) in New Zealand as a "good quality" indicator. The main study confirmed earlier research findings on the links between highest staff salary and quality ratings.[27]

All of the survey kindergartens, and 7 of the 10 childcare centres replied to our question "What is the salary of the highest paid person here?" Although 5 of the 9 playcentres indicated staff received some payment, only 3 provided any salary information.

The highest-paid teachers in kindergarten were all paid above $15 per hour, 5 of the 7 highest-paid childcare staff also received $15 or more per hour, and the remaining 2 between $9 and $15. The 3 playcentre staff received $15, $10, and $8 per hour.

We found in the main study that quality ratings rose proportionate to staff pay. ECSs where the highest staff salary was $15 or more scored more than those earning between $9 and $15, with the lowest scores associated with ECS highest salaries under $9 per hour. We can expect higher pay to be associated with qualifications and experience.

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[25] This analysis of the relationship between socioeconomic mix and children's competencies was not done until the age-6 analysis showed the weight of school socioeconomic mix, suggesting the need for a comparison with ECS socioeconomic mix.

[26] Perseverance, Social Skills with Peers, Communication, Mathematics, Motor Skills, Early Literacy, and Logical Problem Solving.

[27] *Competent Children at 5*, chapter 9.

Level of ECSs Staff Training

We received information about the ECE qualifications of 152 ECS staff working in the survey centres. Six percent of the ECS staff had no qualifications, 27 percent had done, or were completing, training modules, 7 percent had an ECE certificate (equivalent to 2 years' training), and 58 percent had an ECE diploma (requiring a 3-year programme). Nearly 50 percent of those responding were still upgrading their qualifications by undertaking further training. Kindergartens account for the majority of those with ECE diplomas.

Fifty percent of staff responding had at least 6 years' experience in early childhood education with the range being from under 1 year to 35 years.

Our analysis in the main study showed strong associations between the level of ECS training and quality ratings with a clear separation between those ECSs whose highest staff training or qualification was the 3-year diploma, from those with the 2-year equivalent or some training. Two-thirds of the staff responding to our survey had at least the equivalent of 2 years' training.

Summary

On a comparative basis our survey ECSs showed some similar characteristics to those of the main study with kindergartens dominating the category with the largest group size, and playcentres the category of those whose group size was under 20 per session. Kindergartens also had a higher quota of trained staff at the highest (diploma) level. Kindergartens and some childcare centres paid staff at the highest level. As in the main study, kindergartens experienced a higher turnover of children than other ECSs. However, survey kindergartens experienced less staff turnover than those in the main study where kindergarten staff turnover was the highest of the services (Wylie, Thompson, & Kerslake Hendricks, 1996, p. 82). The socioeconomic mix shows some variability brought about by differences in the composition of the main study and survey samples but bears out the trend for families in the lowest-income brackets to use ECSs other than playcentre.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Competencies and Influences

The majority of parents in this survey felt that their children, when approaching the age of 5, were confident in their communication with others, had developed good social skills when dealing with adults, and took a lively interest in the world around them. For the most part they could play equably with other children. Most were familiar with books, and knew how they should be read, even if they were yet to start reading themselves. Almost all of them could associate certain sounds with certain letters and around half could recognise some words. Most children were using numbers in a variety of everyday activities and nearly all could tell you their age.

Parents rated their child's physical skills highly. Indeed most were inclined to take a very positive view of their child's overall development.

Where there were differences in the level of children's competencies, the data and analysis in this study point, as they did in the main study, to differences in family resources—mainly income and mother's education—as the chief explanation, particularly in relation to the children's exposure to cognitive opportunities and experiences outside the home.

Most parents thought their child's ECS experience was positive. ECSs were thought to make an important contribution to their child's social skills. Half the parents also identified an ECS contribution to children's cognitive development as the child neared the age of 5.

In this concluding section, we look at some of the implications for children's progress especially for those coming from backgrounds where the "playing field is not level".

Family Resources

Our families were not wholly typical of the population at large. Many had higher incomes and the adults in the household were by and large better educated than average. Our findings show that the level of material resources available to children, and the level of parental knowledge and skill, were echoed in the children's activities and to some extent in the parents' own evaluation of children's competencies. Children from low-income homes had to make do with fewer experiences and resources than others.

Educational attainment and higher income were linked and have an impact on family resources. More Maori and Pacific Island people have left secondary school without qualifications and this gap in the population at large was perceptible among our parents. But most parents, as they did in the main study, placed a high value on children's learning. Parents from the lowest-income families, and those with the least education (and there is considerable overlap of these 2 categories), were just as likely as others to desire their children to receive as much education as they wanted. They were also the group who were most likely to feel they had missed out on schooling themselves.

If some children get greater learning opportunities than others it is not because the parents of those who are missing out undervalue education, but rather that they cannot afford the necessary resources and in many cases lack the knowledge themselves to enhance children's learning.

In the main study we found that fewer home resources, activities, and experiences were related to lower levels of competency. In particular, we found when linking family resources with children's competency levels that, once we controlled for income, other differences did not remain.

Early Childhood Education

We found in the main study that ECS experience and quality had more associations with children's Social Skills with Peers than did family resources and activities. Survey parents perceived the ECS contribution to their child's Social Skills competencies, irrespective of whether it was the first or last that they attended, as more influential than any other factor. When we look further into the reason why survey parents chose the current (or last) ECS that their child attended, we found that proximity to the child's home, parent's personal needs, and the reputation of the ECS exercised key influences, as they had done in the main study, over parental choice. ECSs are frequently valued by parents for social reasons, as they have formed friendships with the staff and other parents, and their children often attend with neighbourhood children. ECSs in this context become an integral part of the fabric of family life, part of the overall network of community relationships.

Although we cannot, as we did in the main study, arrive at definitive associations between access to quality ECS and affordability, survey results tend to support the study findings. Three-quarters of our parents, including most of those on low incomes, elected to send their child to kindergarten where choice was not inhibited by cost. Access and affordability, along with parental perceptions of ECS quality, remain key determinants of children's type of early childhood education. Kindergartens in the survey showed a higher level of the key quality indicators in terms of staff qualifications and staff salary levels.

It follows that any increase in parental costs for the currently low-cost options such as kindergarten could render access to early childhood education of a reasonable quality unaffordable, widening the existing gap between children from low-income families and other children. It is also likely to have a broader impact on a society where ECSs have been seen as a integral part of family and social life and where children and their parents have by and large not been divided by socio-economic stratification. There are consequences too for ECS quality, if competition for the parental dollar means employment of fewer staff or less well-qualified staff, or the lowering of staff salaries, to balance the budget. These concerns have recently come to the surface following the removal of kindergarten teachers from the State Sector Act.

Implications of the Research

This survey supports the main-study findings of the complementary relationship between children's home and family resources and ECS resources. As in the main study, we also see indirect associations through ECS contribution to family life styles, by allowing parents to take paid employment. It is increasingly difficult for New Zealand families to manage financially and afford participation in the community on only one income. Three-fifths of the main caregivers in this survey, some with younger children than our survey child, were in paid employment. This would not be possible without affordable ECSs. Thus these services indirectly contribute to the family resources available to support and develop children's competencies within the home.

We are not able to quantify as we did in the main study the significant associations found between children's competencies and ECS attendance, and more importantly attendance at quality ECSs. But we can assume some concordance with the main study, where we can make

comparisons, particularly those related to parental income and education in terms of their ability to enrich their child's learning, and parental perceptions of the benefits for their child of ECS attendance. We also found as we did in the main study that both family and ECS experiences are shaped and influenced by the resources available, and thus the educational and social policy environment.

We have been fortunate in New Zealand to have had a policy environment which has supported quality in ECSs of low cost to parents by emphasising appropriate training, providing a regulatory environment which links government funding to the meeting of (at least) minimal standards of provision. Government funding, which has for the main part not taken the form of income-based subsidies, is important. The merits of these policies are borne out by the way in which early childhood education is clearly enmeshed into family lives irrespective of family type or ability to pay.

The survey sample is not wholly representative of the population at large and is skewed to a greater extent than the main-study sample towards the better-resourced families. But it is large enough to give us confidence that the associations we have found between groups are robust. The survey confirms and consolidates the findings of the main study particularly with regard to the associations between children's learning opportunities and the income and educational resources at the disposal of their parents. Survey and main-study parents also had in common the main reasons for ECS choice and shared like views on the positive contribution their child's ECS had made to their child's development of social (interpersonal) competencies and cognitive development.

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APPENDICES

•NZCER/FACULTY OF EDUCATION, VUW. CODE: _____

•••CONFIDENTIAL•••

COMPETENT CHILDREN

LIGHT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

NZCER/VUW (EDUC)

1. DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____ 2. INTERVIEWER ID: _____

3. CHILD'S ID: _____ 4. CHILD'S SEX: 1 female
2 male

5. CHILD'S D.O.B: _____ 6. CHILD'S AGE: ____ yrs ____ mths

7. RESPONDENT'S SEX: 1 female
2 male

8. RESPONDENT'S RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD: 1 mother
2 father
3 other _____ 4 5 6

INTERVIEWER'S NOTES ONLY:

LENGTH OF TIME TO COMPLETE: _____

CONTACTS COMPLETED? ☐ yes ☐ no

COMMENTS:

INTERVIEWER'S INITIALS: _____ CHECKED BY: _____

CORE STUDY 1

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

MAIN CAREGIVERS OF CHILDREN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES

SECTION A: FAMILY COMPOSITION; LIFESTYLE CHANGES; STRESSORS

In this interview, we are going to talk mostly about (_____) and his/her early childhood experiences. But first of all, I have a few questions about the household (_____) lives in and the people (____) lives with, so I know who you mean if you mention names during this interview.
First of all could you tell me how many people usually live in the house with (____), including (____)

A1a) _____ **Total number in permanent household (including target child)**

And could you tell me what their relationship is to (_____)?

From the information given complete the remaining questions in this section

A1b) Family composition

1 two parent
2 two parent - extended
3 solo
4 solo - extended
5 one (biological) parent & partner
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe _____ 1 2 3 4

If interviewee indicates that they are the guardian of the child ask...*

A1c) Length of guardianship _____ months (NB: N/A = 77)

Interviewer to check from the information given in answer to question 1b what is (____)'s place in the family relative to the other children

A1d) _____ **How many older brothers/male children/young persons are in the household**

A1e) _____ **How many younger brothers/male children/young persons are in the household**

A1f) _____ **How many older sisters/female children/young persons are in the household**

A1g) _____ **How many younger sisters/female children/young persons are in the household**

A1h) Is (___) a twin?

1 no
2 yes

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

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A2a) **Have there been any changes in (_____)'s life over the past three or four years, such as a change of house, change in the people living at home or other things that (_____) has had to adjust to?**

1 no
2 yes *(if yes, describe below)*
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

A2b)
1 moved house/moved area
2 change of job (either parent)/job stress/changed work hours
3 financial difficulty
4 accident/major illness/surgery of family member
5 death of family member/friend/pet
6 change in household composition/sib born
7 increased demands of household member
8 frequent absence one parent/parental stress/relationship problems
9 long-term or permanent absence one parent
10 change of ECS
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

SECTION B: CHILD DEVELOPMENT

B1) Now could you tell me briefly about (_____). What sort of child is s/he usually?

1 positive social-emotional
2 neutral social-emotional
3 negative social-emotional
4 positive cognitive-language
5 neutral cognitive-language
6 negative cognitive-language
7 positive motor/physical confidence
8 neutral motor/physical confidence
9 negative motor/lack of physical confidence
10 positive independence
11 neutral independence
12 negative independence/dependence
13 imaginative/creative
14 sensitive/shy
15 impatient/gives in easily if something is hard
16 strong willed/will of own/headstrong
17 boisterous/rough/bad temper
18 happy/happy go lucky/easy going
19 spoilt
20 helpful
21 organiser/bossy
22 strengths in music/dance/creativity
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

COMMENTS: _____

_____

_____

I'd like to ask you some general questions about (_____)'s health and overall development.

B2) _____ months How old was s/he when s/he first started walking?
[If don't know/can't remember, code = 66]

B3) _____ months And when did s/he say his/her first words?
[If don't know/can't remember, code = 66]

B4a) Has s/he had any serious illnesses or accidents or spent more than a couple of days in hospital for any reason?

1 no (go to question B5a)
2 yes *(if yes, describe below)*
3 in hospital overnight/for test/for fracture
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

B4b)
1 illness/accident requiring operation/hospitalization/intervention
2 congenital problem requiring operation/hospitalization/ intervention
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

B5a) Does (_____) visit a specialist or therapist for any reason (for example a speech therapist)?

1 no [go to B6a]
2 yes (if **yes** note reason(s) below)
3 no - would like him/her to
6 don't know
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe :_____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

B5b)
1 allergies/hay fever/asthma
2 to monitor hearing/vision
3 to monitor speech/language
4 to monitor physical development (reason: _____
5 to monitor intellectual development (reason:_____
6 to monitor emotional development (reason: _____
7 to monitor medication (for: _____
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

B6a) Has (_____) ever had his/her hearing checked?

1 no [go to B7a]
2 yes
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

B6b) What were the results?

1 no problems detected
2 problem detected/suspected - being monitored
3 problem detected - now corrected
4 mild loss
5 moderate-severe loss
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

B7a) Has (_____) ever had his/her vision checked?

1 no [go to Section C]
2 yes
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

B7b) What were the results?

1 no problems detected
2 problem detected/suspected - being monitored
3 problem detected - now corrected
4 wears glasses/contact lenses
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

SECTION C: EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION HISTORY

C1) I am going to ask you some questions now about the early childhood care and education settings that (_____) has spent time at. I am going to ask you to tell me more about the first arrangement where (_____) spent time on a regular basis, as well as his/her time at *[ECS through which child located]*. (or if the child is now at school) - the early childhood service where (____) spent time immediately before starting school - (this becomes the target ECS)

Can you tell me which was the first place (____) spent more than two or three hours a week on a regular basis for at least three months, other than with you? *prompt if necessary with list below*

And what was the total length of time spent at - first ecs and target ecs

[INTERVIEWER'S NOTES ONLY:]

NAME/LOCATION FIRST ECS: TOTAL TIME SPENT: (months)_____

_____

NAME/LOCATION TARGET ECS: TOTAL TIME SPENT: (months)_____

_____

FIRST ECS	TARGET ECS	
1	1	Private Care (relative/friend)
2	2	Family Day Care
3	3	Playgroup (any (other) group where parents and children attend at the same time)
4	4	Creche/Childcare Centre
5	5	Playcentre
6	6	Pacific Island Language Nest (language:_____)
7	7	Te Kohanga Reo
8	8	Kindergarten
9	9	Private Preschool
10		Other: _____
	10	Other: _____
11		Other: _____
	11	Other: _____
66	66	don't know/can't remember
77	77	N/A
88	88	missing

NOW ASK QUESTIONS C2 TO C4 ABOUT **FIRST** ECS.

C2) Can you tell me why you chose (this ECS)? (record up to three reasons)

FIRST ECS	TARGET ECS	
1	1	ECS facilities/environment
2	2	spatial/geographical
3	3	financial
4	4	disciplinary/climate
5	5	educational standards/reputation
6	6	ECS type (inc. Maori language)
7	7	ECS mix (socio-economic status or ethnicity)
8	8	curriculum/programme/activities
9	9	personal (inc. family attendance (past or future), friendships with staff
10	10	peer group/friends
11	11	suited parent's needs (e.g. for hours/breathing space)
12	12	ecs/class size (inc. 1:1 attention)
13	13	by default (no choice)
66	66	don't know/can't remember
77	77	N/A
88	88	missing
99		other - describe: _____
	99	other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:
FIRST ECS: _____

_____

TARGET ECS: _____

_____

How often did/does s/he go to (this ECS)?
[Interviewer's notes only]

FIRST ECS
_____ days *per week*
_____ hours per day

TARGET ECS
_____ days *per week*
_____ hours per day

C3a) Calculate total hours per week

FIRST ECS	TARGET ECS	
___	___	hours per week

C3b) Did/does (____) attend regularly, that is, every or most weeks?

FIRST ECS	TARGET ECS	
1	1	no
2	2	yes
6	6	don't know/can't remember
7	7	N/A
8	8	missing
9		other - describe: _____
	9	other - describe: _____

If attendance not every/most weeks]

C3c) Why did/does (_____) not go regularly?
(record up to three reasons)

FIRST ECS	TARGET ECS	
1	1	transport problems
2	2	health problems
3	3	child didn't like ECS
4	4	parents didn't like ECS
5	5	conflicted with work/study/home agendas
6	6	couldn't afford
7	7	conflicted with other ECS
8	8	child prefers to be at home
9	9	time inconvenient to parents (e.g. 'we sleep in')
66	66	don't know/can't remember
77	77	N/A
88	88	missing
99		other - describe: _____
	99	other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

FIRST ECS: _____

_____

TARGET ECS: _____

_____

C4) What do you think that s/he got out of the time that s/he spent with/at *(this ECS) - either pluses or minuses*?

FIRST ECS	TARGET ECS	
1	1	positive social-emotional
2	2	negative social-emotional
3	3	positive cognitive-language
4	4	negative cognitive-language
5	5	positive motor/physical confidence
6	6	negative motor/physical confidence
7	7	positive independence
8	8	negative independence/dependence
9	9	positive cultural
10	10	negative cultural
11	11	general ECS experiences - positive
12	12	general ECS experiences - negative
13	13	difficulty adjusting to ECS programme/routine
14	14	parental concern re quality of care/education
15	15	initially/small problem/low frequency
16	16	boredom/there too long
17	17	too structured
18	18	too many children/child gets lost
19	19	more demands on parent
20	20	health/tiredness
66	66	don't know/can't remember
77	77	N/A
88	88	missing
99		other - describe: _____
	99	other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

FIRST ECS: _____

_____

TARGET ECS: _____

_____

Now I'd like to ask the same series of questions about the early childhood service that (____) now attends, or which (____) attended just before starting school, which is.....?

WHEN QUESTIONS ABOUT FIRST ECS COMPLETED, RETURN TO C2 AND REPEAT QUESTIONS C2 TO C4 ABOUT TARGET ECS.

C5a) *(TARGET ECS ONLY.)* **Does/did it cost you anything for him/her to go to (target ECS)?**

1 no [go to C6]
2 yes
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

(If cost is involved.) **How much does/did it work out to per week?**

NOTES/OR CALCULATIONS TO TURN INTO A WEEKLY COST

_____

C5b) $_____ per week

If (____) has been to more than one ecs ask qu. C6: if not go to Section D

C6) **Thinking about all of the early childhood services that (___) has ever attended, which one do you think has had the greatest influence on him/her?**

1 Private Care (relative/friend)
2 Family Day Care
3 Playgroup
4 Creche/Childcare Centre
5 Playcentre
6 Pacific Island Language Nest (language:_____)
7 Te Kohanga Reo
8 Kindergarten
9 Private Preschool
10 Other ECS 1: identify _____
11 Other ECS 2: identify _____
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

_____ b 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

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SECTION D:CHILDREN'S COMPETENCIES

I've got some more questions now about the sort of child (____) is and the sort of things s/he can do. I will ask you to let me know if the descriptions I am going to read out to you would describe him/her Never, Hardly Ever, Sometimes, Often, or Always.

D1) Does (_____) show good physical coordination? (able to keep her/his balance, run without tripping over..)

☐ a) Never ☐ b) Hardly ever ☐ c) Sometimes ☐ d) often ☐ e) always

_____ f 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9

D2) Does (_____) generally show good control when using her/his hands (eg to use scissors, sellotape, fit things together)?

☐ a) Never ☐ b) Hardly ever ☐ c) Sometimes ☐ d) often ☐ e) always

_____ f 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9

D3) Can (_____) get another child to let her/him have a turn with something by asking?

☐ a) Never ☐ b) Hardly ever ☐ c) Sometimes ☐ d) often ☐ e) always

_____ f 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9

D4) When (_____) is playing with other children, does s/he take turns and share, understanding rules and fair play?

☐ a) Never ☐ b) Hardly ever ☐ c) Sometimes ☐ d) often ☐ e) always

_____ f 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9

D5) Does (_____) ask for help and/or information when s/he needs it?

☐ a) Never ☐ b) Hardly ever ☐ c) Sometimes ☐ d) often ☐ e) always

_____ f 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9

D6) Is (_____) a curious child? That is, does s/he ask a lot of questions and/or take things apart to find out how they work?

☐ a) Never ☐ b) Hardly ever ☐ c) Sometimes ☐ d) often ☐ e) always

_____ f 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9

D7) **Is s/he able to remember and carry out a simple instruction after hearing it only once?**

☐ a) Never ☐ b) Hardly ever ☐ c) Sometimes ☐ d) often ☐ e) always

f 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

D8) **Can s/he be relied upon to pass simple messages from one person to another?**

☐ a) Never ☐ b) Hardly ever ☐ c) Sometimes ☐ d) often ☐ e) always

f 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

D9) **Does [___] get involved in complex fantasy or pretend play with children or adults, where s/he suggests: " You pretend that...." or " You be the ..." ?**

☐ a) Never ☐ b) Hardly ever ☐ c) Sometimes ☐ d) often ☐ e) always

f 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

D10) **Thinking about the skills we've just talked about that (____) has picked up over the past 4 or 5 years, in what ways have you and the family contributed to the development of these skills?**

f 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

SECTION E: CULTURAL CAPITAL/HOME-BASED ACTIVITIES: LANGUAGE: ETHNICITY

Now I would like to hear about some of the things that (_____) does when s/he is not at (ECS or school name).

E1) What sorts of things do you often do with (_____) as a family? *[IF NO ANSWERS FORTHCOMING, SAY..."To help your memory, think back to last weekend..." but DO NOT PROMPT]*

1 physical activities (eg. sport, walking, swimming)
2 socio-dramatic activities
3 aesthetic-creative activities
4 literacy-related activities (eg. reading, visits to library)
5 maths-science related activities
6 social-based activities (includes general play with siblings/whanau)
7 exploration/special events/trips/holidays
8 routine housework/gardening/home activities/shopping
9 watch TV/go to movies
10 ECS/school-related activities
11 animals
12 church/community activities
13 don't do much as a family
14 negative experiences
15 music/dance
16 eat out (cafes, Mcdonalds)
17 related to parent/s work
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

E2) If you see that (_____) is having real difficulty with something s/he is doing (like building something or fixing something), what would you generally do?

CHILD-INITIATED
1 wait for him/her to ask for help, then show him/her how to do it
2 wait for him/her to ask, and then finish it for him/her
3 respond to child's cues (e.g., expressions of frustration)
ADULT-INITIATED
4 ask if s/he needs help
5 help child without asking first
6 take over the project and finish it for the child
NEGATIVE RESPONSE
7 react negatively, e.g., criticise or punish child
8 tell child to give up/do something else
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

E3a) If you see (____) doing something s/he knows s/he is not supposed to do, what do you say or do?

_____ 4 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

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E3b) Would your partner have the same approach?

_____ 5 1 2 1

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

NB: ABSENT PARENT

[These questions to be asked only if ex-partner (father/mother of child) does not live with (_____)] Otherwise go to E6a

E4a) Does (_____) still see his/her father?

1 no *(go to question E4)*
2 yes
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing

E4b) How do they get on?

1 well
2 don't see each other much, so not sure
3 don't get on
4 varies
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

OR

E5a) Does (_____) still see his/her mother?

1 no *(go to question E4)*
2 yes
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing

E5b) How do they get on?

1 well
2 don't see each other much, so not sure
3 don't get on
4 varies
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

E6a) I'm going to read out a list of reading activities that children sometimes do. Please let me know if (_____) ever does any of these things:

[read out - circle if answer is 'yes']

1 plays at reading/pretends to read
2 memorizes favourite stories
3 ask for favourite books to be read to him/her
4 looks at books by him/herself
5 knows that certain sounds go with certain letters
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

E6b) Is there anything that (_____) does with reading that I haven't mentioned?

1 no
2 yes
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other

E6c) Describe: _____

1 reads (real words)
2 makes up stories from pictures/books
3 labels/brand names/signs
4 family/friends names
5 asks about words
6 plays teacher
7 looks at story while listening to tape/video
8 sings/chants alphabet
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

E7a) And thinking about numbers and counting, does (_____) ever do any of these things? ***[Read out - circle if answer is 'yes']***

1 counts out loud - "1, 2, 3, 4, 5" and so on
2 sings songs involving counting, or says counting rhymes
3 counts things, such as buttons, pegs, people etc.
4 gets involved with TV/video/computer programmes involving counting
5 uses numbers when involved with cooking, building etc.
6 talks about halves, quarters and so on
7 tells how old s/he is
8 tells or tries to tell the time
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

E7b) Is there anything that (_____) does with numbers that I haven't mentioned?

1 no
2 yes
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

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E7c) Describe: _____

1 game/s/puzzle/s
2 knows phone number/s &/or knows address/es/dials phone numbers
3 uses numbers to describe (eg millions rather than heaps: numbers of sleeps someone is away)
4 adds/subtracts
5 multiplies
6 asks questions involving numbers (eg days of week, ages, time)
7 money (inc. pretend money/ pretend chequebook)
8 recognizes numerals in books/on signs/on letterboxes
9 understanding of pattern
10 writes numbers
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

E8a) What is (_____)'s main language?
(record one only)
1 English
2 Maori
3 Cook Island Maori
4 Samoan
5 Tongan
6 Niuean
7 Indian
8 Mandarin
9 Cantonese
10 European (e.g. Hungarian, Greek)
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

E8b) And does s/he speak or understand any other languages?
1 no
2 yes (identify below)
3 few words or phrases *(identify below)*
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

E8c) OTHER LANGUAGE:

1 English
2 Maori
3 Cook Island Maori
4 Samoan
5 Tongan
6 Niuean
7 Indian
8 Asian
9 European (eg Hungarian, Greek - specify)_____
66 don't know
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

E9) How would you describe (_____)'s ethnic background (*if prompt needed*...Would you say s/he is a Pakeha, Maori, Samoan, or ....?)

1 Pakeha/New Zealander/Kiwi/NZ European
2 Maori
3 Cook Island Maori
4 Samoan
5 Tongan
6 Niuean
7 Indian
8 Other Asian
9 European (specifically from Europe e.g. Hungarian, Greek - specify)
_____
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

SECTION F: TRANSITION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL

If child is already at school, write in the name of the school in F1 at * and then ask F2.

F1) Have you decided yet which primary school (_____) will be going to?

1 no [go to Section G]
2 yes
3 two or more schools being considered
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

___ Can you tell me what school that is? *_____

[If considering two or more, which school is it most likely to be?]

_____

F2) Can you tell me why (_____) is likely to go there/ you chose this school?

(record up to three reasons)
1 school facilities/environment
2 spatial/geographical
3 financial
4 disciplinary/climate
5 educational standards/reputation
6 school type
7 school mix (socio-economic/ethnic
8 curriculum/programme/activities
9 personal (inc. family attendance, friendships with staff)
10 peer group/friends
11 to suit parent/caregiver
12 school size/class size (inc. individual attention)
13 by default (no choice)
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe:

_____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

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SECTION G: WORK HISTORY AND INCOME

Now, a few questions about working outside the home.

G1a) Are you in paid work at the moment, either part-time or full-time?

1 no *(go to G2a)*
2 yes, *full-time* (30 hours or more per week)
3 yes, *part-time/temporary work from time to time*

G1b) __ What sort of work do you do? job 1: _____

__ job 2: _____

(If more than two jobs, identify the two jobs s/he spends most time at)

G1c) Roughly how many hours a week do you work?

_____ hours per week

[IF RESPONDENT HAS A PARTNER, COMPLETE THIS SECTION, IF NOT, GO TO QUESTION G3]

PARTNER'S WORK HISTORY

G2a) Is your partner in paid work at the moment, either part-time or full-time?

1 no (go to question G3)
2 yes, *full-time* (30 hours per week or more)
3 yes, *part-time/temporary work from time to time*
5 don't know/can't remember
6 N/A
7 missing
8 other - describe: _____

G2b) ___ What sort of work does s/he do? job 1: _____

___ job 2: _____

(If more than two jobs, identify the two jobs s/he spends most time at)

G2c) Roughly how many hours per week does s/he work?

_____ hours per week

I have a couple of questions now about your family's income....

G3) What are the main sources of income in your family?
(read list if necessary)

1 wages or salary
2 self-employed earnings, or proceeds of business
3 Family Support
4 other benefit
5 family/tribal trust/bequest/annuity
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

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G4) I am going to read you a list of different incomes. Thinking about your family, please tell me the range your family income falls into..., before tax. Please stop me when I get to the range which applies to your family.

* use your discretion in reading out these incomes; use the information given about jobs to guide you, eg if someone is on a social welfare benefit start at the lower end of the list.*

1 over $80,001 per year
2 between $70,001 - 80,000 per year
3 between $60,001 - 70,000 per year
4 between $50,001 - 60,000 per year
5 between $40,001 - 50,000 per year
6 between $30,001 - 40,000 per year
7 between $25,001 - 30,000 per year
8 between $20,001 - 25,000 per year
9 between $15,001 - 20,000 per year
10 between $10,001 - 15,000 per year
11 between $7,501 - 10,000 per year
12 between $5,001 - 7,500 per year
13 between $2,501 - 5,000 per year
14 $2,500 or less per year
15 refused to answer
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

SECTION H: EDUCATIONAL HISTORY OF PARENT(S); FUTURE EDUCATION FOR CHILD

H1) Finally, please tell me something about your education - and (if relevant) the education of your partner ... did you have a chance to get as much education as you wanted?

RESP

1 no
2 yes
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe:

H2a) And did you complete any school qualifications? If yes - What is the highest?

[Code highest qualification obtained. If education not in New Zealand, identify closest match. Repeat all questions about partner if relevant]

RESP	PARTNER	
1	1	no school qualification
2	2	School Certificate in one or more subjects
3	3	Sixth Form Certificate or University Entrance in one or more subjects
4	4	Higher School Certificate or Higher Leaving Certificate
5	5	University Bursary or Scholarship
6	6	other school qualification (specify_____)
66	66	don't know/can't remember
77	77	N/A
88	88	missing
99		other - describe: _____
	99	other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

H2b) And since leaving school, have you received any educational or on-the-job qualifications?

[Code highest qualification obtained. Repeat question for partner if relevant.]

RESP	PARTNER	
1	1	no qualifications since leaving school
2	2	Trade Certificate or Advanced Trade Certificate
3	3	Nursing Certificate, Diploma or Degree
4	4	Teachers Certificate or Diploma
5	5	New Zealand Certificate or Diploma
6	6	Technicians Certificate
7	7	University Certificate or Diploma below Bachelor level
8	8	Bachelors Degree
9	9	Postgraduate degree, Certificate or Diploma
10	10	other qualifications such as ACA, Polytechnic Certificate or Diploma (specify:_____)
11	11	on the job/in-house qualifications
66	66	don't know/can't remember
77	77	N/A
88	88	missing
99		other - describe: _____
	99	other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

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H3) How much education do you want (_____) to receive?

1 as far as wants to go/completely up to child/as far as capable of going
2 university/other tertiary
3 education in widest sense
4 enough to be worthwhile
5 leave before School Cert
6 School Cert minimum
7 end of secondary
8 reluctance to push child
9 "a lot/the best/everything"
66 don't know/can't remember/haven't thought about
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

[Read out]
The present government policy is for students to pay part of the costs of education beyond secondary school. For example a full-time university or polytechnic student pays about $1800 per year, which is approximately 18% of the total amount the government spends.

H4a) What percentage of the fees for education after secondary school do <u>you</u> think that students should have to pay?

_____ %

1 should be free
2 depends on their income
3 depends on course taking
4 depends on their performance
5 rather pay higher taxes
6 little/minimal
7 specific dollar amount given
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

H4b) What percentage of the fees for education after secondary school do you think that you will actually be able to pay for (_____)'s study?

_____%

1 will pay if we have to
2 would find money somehow
3 money would be a problem
4 specific sum given
5 child will make a contribution
6 don't know/can't remember
7 N/A
8 missing
9 other - describe: _____

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Thinking now about secondary school...

H5a) **Have you decided yet what secondary school (_____) is likely to enrol at?**

1 no *(go to H6)*
2 yes
3 two or more schools being considered
4 state
5 integrated
6 private
7 co-ed
8 single-sex
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

H5b) **Can you tell me what school that is?**

_____

[If considering two or more, which school is it <u>most likely</u> to be?

_____

H5c) **Can you tell me why (_____) is likely to go to (school name)?**
(code up to three reasons)

1 school facilities/environment
2 spatial/geographical
3 financial
4 disciplinary/climate
5 educational standards/reputation
6 school type
7 school mix
8 curriculum/programme/activities
9 personal
10 peer group/friends
11 to suit parent
12 school size/class size (inc. individual attention)
13 by default (no choice)
66 don't know/can't remember
77 N/A
88 missing
99 other - describe: _____

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

_____

H6) Finally, I've asked you a lot of questions. Is there anything else about (____) that you would like to tell me or any comments you would like to make about any of the things I've asked you about?

COMMENTS:

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FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION

We would like to contact you again in two years time. Just in case you decide to move during the next year or so, please tell me the name, phone number and address of three relatives or friends who are likely to know where you are living if you have moved:

CONTACT ONE

NAME: _____ PHONE NO.: _____

ADDRESS: _____

RELATIONSHIP TO YOU: _____

CONTACT TWO

NAME: _____ PHONE NO.: _____

ADDRESS: _____

RELATIONSHIP TO YOU: _____

CONTACT THREE

NAME: _____ PHONE NO.: _____

ADDRESS: _____

RELATIONSHIP TO YOU: _____

_____ _____ _____

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE CHILD'S NAME TODAY'S DATE

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME

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LIGHT INTERVIEW - KINDERGARTEN PROFILE

FORM A

Please answer the questions for this week. If there are any special circumstances which make this week very different from a ` normal ' week please describe these circumstances in the space provided on the last page.

1. How many children are on your total roll this week? _____

2. What is the average number of children present at any one session

   a) AM_____?

   b) PM_____?

   c) Comment _____

   _____

3. How would you describe the stability of your roll?

☐ a) very stable ☐ b) a small proportion of children come and go ☐ c) high turnover of children

4. What is the socio-economic profile of the children at this centre?

☐ a) wide range ☐ b) mainly middle class ☐ c) mainly low-middle income
☐ d) mainly low income/and or on benefits
☐ e) other (please describe): _____

5. What is the ethnic profile of the children at this centre?

☐ a) mainly Pakeha/European ☐ b) mainly Maori
☐ c) mainly Pacific Island ☐ d) mixed
☐ e) other (please describe:) _____

6. What is the donation for four year olds?
   Please indicate using whichever answer is easiest for your centre to calculate.

   a) per session:$_____ b) per week:$_____

7. What is the age range of the children here? _____

_____

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8. **How are they grouped?**

_____ 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

9. Is this kindergarten chartered?

☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐ c) in process

10. How often in the past year has the charter, and the kindergarten's performance in relation to it, been discussed in meetings with parents?

_____

11. What is the average number of adults present at any one session AM____? who are responsible for children?

a) AM____?

b) PM____?

12. What is the salary of the highest paid person here?

$_____ annual salary before tax

13. How do you plan the children's learning here? (please describe **who** does the planning, **when** planning takes place, for what period, are there individual or group plans, is it recorded and anything else you feel is relevant)

_____ a 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

_____

_____ b 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

_____

14. How do you assess the children's learning? (please describe **what** is done, **when** it is done **by whom**, are all of the children assessed, etc.)

_____ a 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

_____

_____ b 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

100

100

15. How do you record the children's learning? (please describe **what** is recorded, **by whom**, **when** recording is done, etc.)

a 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

b 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

16. How do you link planning, assessment and recording?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

17. What is your kindergarten's philosophy? What does it aim to provide?
(If you have a brochure that you usually give out to parents when they make enquiries and/or enrol their child, please send us a copy in the envelope provided.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

18. **What are the day to day behaviour rules for children in your kindergarten?**
(eg 'no running', 'no interrupting', etc)

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

19. **What staff/caregiver development has occurred here in the last 12 months?**

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

20. **What competencies would you expect an almost 5 year old child to have in these spheres:**

a) communication (language)

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

b) social skills

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

c) learning/exploration (such as inquisitiveness and perseverence)

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

d) early literacy

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

e) early maths

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

f) puzzles/problem-solving

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

g) physical ability (eg in outside play, balancing, ball handling)

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

h) physical dexterity (eg in fine work with hands)

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

i) music

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

21. PLEASE SUPPLY THE FOLLOWING DETAILS FOR ALL THOSE PEOPLE COUNTED FOR LICENSING PURPOSES

PEOPLE COUNTED FOR LICENSING PURPOSES	1	2	3
a)SEX (MALE/FEMALE)			
b) QUALIFICATIONS GAINED POST SECONDARY SCHOOL (use categories shown below)			
c) EARLY CHILDHOOD QUALIFICATION/S			
d) YEARS OF WORK ((paid or volunteer) IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS			
e) CURRENTLY UPGRADING EARLY CHILDHOOD QUALIFICATIONS? (Please describe if yes)			
f) SELF-DESCRIBED ETHNICITY			
g) PART/FULL TIME STAFF MEMBER (Full time = more than 30 hours per week)			

QUALIFICATIONS: if not received in New Zealand, please identify qualification which is the closest match.

QUALIFICATIONS OBTAINED SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL:
No qualifications since leaving school/Trade Certificate/ Nursing Certificate, Diploma or Degree
Teacher's Certificate or Diploma/ New Zealand Certificate or Diploma/Technicians Certificate
University Certificate or Diploma below Bachelor level (specify)/Bachelors Degree/ Postgraduate degree, Certificate or Diploma Early Childhood qualification (specify)/Other qualifications, such as ACA, local Polytechnic Certificate or Diploma (specify)

21. PEOPLE COUNTED FOR LICENSING PURPOSES	4	5	6
a)SEX (MALE/FEMALE)			
b) QUALIFICATIONS GAINED POST SECONDARY SCHOOL (use categories shown below)			
c) EARLY CHILDHOOD QUALIFICATION/S			
d) YEARS OF WORK ((paid or volunteer) IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS			
e) CURRENTLY UPGRADING EARLY CHILDHOOD QUALIFICATIONS? (Please describe if yes)			
f) SELF-DESCRIBED ETHNICITY			
g) PART/FULL TIME STAFF MEMBER (Full time = more than 30 hours per week)			

QUALIFICATIONS: if not received in New Zealand, please identify qualification which is the closest match.

QUALIFICATIONS OBTAINED SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL:
No qualifications since leaving school/Trade Certificate/ Nursing Certificate, Diploma or Degree
Teacher's Certificate or Diploma/ New Zealand Certificate or Diploma/Technicians Certificate
University Certificate or Diploma below Bachelor level (specify)/Bachelors Degree/ Postgraduate degree, Certificate or Diploma Early Childhood qualification (specify)/Other qualifications, such as ACA, local Polytechnic Certificate or Diploma (specify)

21. PEOPLE COUNTED FOR LICENSING PURPOSES	7	8	9
a)SEX (MALE/FEMALE)			
b) QUALIFICATIONS GAINED POST SECONDARY SCHOOL (use categories shown below)			
c) EARLY CHILDHOOD QUALIFICATION/S			
d) YEARS OF WORK ((paid or volunteer) IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS			
e) CURRENTLY UPGRADING EARLY CHILDHOOD QUALIFICATIONS? (Please describe if yes)			
f) SELF-DESCRIBED ETHNICITY			
g) PART/FULL TIME STAFF MEMBER (Full time = more than 30 hours per week)			

QUALIFICATIONS: if not received in New Zealand, please identify qualification which is the closest match.

QUALIFICATIONS OBTAINED SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL:

No qualifications since leaving school/Trade Certificate/ Nursing Certificate, Diploma or Degree
Teacher's Certificate or Diploma/ New Zealand Certificate or Diploma/Technicians Certificate
University Certificate or Diploma below Bachelor level (specify)/Bachelors Degree/ Postgraduate degree, Certificate or Diploma Early Childhood qualification (specify)/Other qualifications, such as ACA, local Polytechnic Certificate or Diploma (specify)

22. PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAKE THIS WEEK DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS

23. IF WE HAD ASKED YOU THESE SAME QUESTIONS IN THE FIRST WEEK OF NOVEMBER OF LAST YEAR, 1993, WOULD YOUR RESPONSES HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT?

☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐ c) in process

IF `YES' PLEASE ANSWER FORM B.

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LIGHT INTERVIEW - KINDERGARTEN PROFILE

FORM B

Please answer the questions as they apply for the first week of November 1993.

1. How many children were on your total roll this week? _____
   (i.e. the first week of November 1993)

2. What was the average number of children present at any one session

   a) AM_____?

   b) PM_____?

   c) Comment _____

   _____

3. How would you describe the stability of your roll at that time?

☐ a) very stable ☐ b) a small proportion of children come and go ☐ c) high turnover of children

4. What was the socio-economic profile of the children at this kindergarten?

☐ a) wide range ☐ b) mainly middle class ☐ c) mainly low-middle income
☐ d) mainly low income/and or on benefits
☐ e) other (please describe): _____

5. What was the ethnic profile of the children at this kindergarten?

☐ a) mainly Pakeha/European ☐ b) mainly Maori
☐ c) mainly Pacific Island ☐ d) mixed
☐ e) other (please describe:) _____

6. What was the donation for four year olds?
   Please indicate using whichever answer is easiest for your kindergarten to calculate.

   a) per session:$_____ b) per week:$_____

7. What was the age range of the children here? _____

_____

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8. How were they grouped?

_____ 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9

9. Was this kindergarten chartered?

☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐ c) in process

10. What was the average number of adults present at any one session who were responsible for children?

a) AM____?

b) PM____?

11. What was the salary of the highest paid person here?
(Please answer whatever is easiest for you to calculate)

$_____ annual salary before tax

12. How did you plan the children's learning here? (please describe **who** did the planning, **when** planning took place, for what period, were there individual or group plans, was it recorded and anything else you feel is relevant)

_____ a 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9
_____ b 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9

13. How did you assess the children's learning? (please describe **what** was done, **when** it was done **by whom**, were all of the children assessed, etc.)

_____ a 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9
_____ b 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9

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14. **How did you record the children's learning? (please describe what was recorded, by whom, when recording was done, etc.**

a 1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

b 1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

15. How did you link planning, assessment and recording?

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

16. What was your kindergarten's philosophy? What did it aim to provide?

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

17. You completed **FORM B** because you felt that there had been changes at the kindergarten since November 1993. Which of these changes that you have described above do you feel has had the greatest impact on the kindergarten. (more than one category may be ticked)

a) the way children are grouped
b) the staff
c) the facilities
d) the roll composition
e) other (please specify) _____

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9